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FAMOUS MONSTERS #287 SEP/OCT 2016

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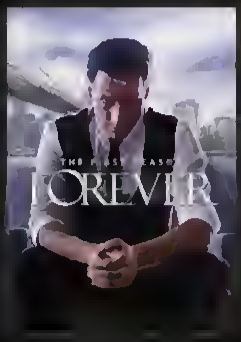
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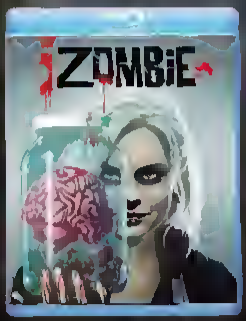
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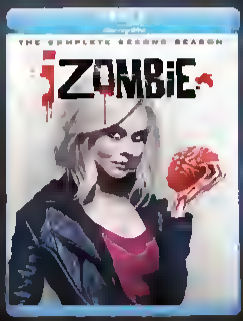
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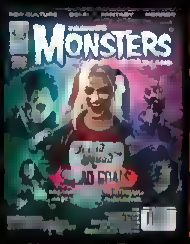
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PAUL WEE

OPENING WOUNDS

The first time I saw KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, I thought that the TV gods had answered my prayers. Growing up in the suburbs of New York in the '70s, I spent many afternoons watching monster movies on a tiny black-and-white television, and they were all larger than life. WOR-TV channel 9 would famously screen Kong marathons on Thanksgiving Day with KING KONG, SON OF KONG, and MIGHTY JOE YOUNG. And whoever did the programming for THE 4:30 MOVIE on channel 7 was clearly a Monster Kid, many of its theme weeks were devoted to movies that were right up my alley: Japanese "Monster Week," "Lost World Week," "Sci-Fi Week," "Vincent Price/Edgar Allan Poe Week," "PLANET OF THE APES Week," and more. These special weeks were advertised in *TV Guide*, making them seem like a big event, and I would often clip out the pictures and tape them to my bedroom door. Folks who grew up in the tri-state area in the '70s surely have fond memories of the epic 4:30 MOVIE theme that would play right before trimmed-down versions of MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, GODZILLA VS. THE THING, SOYLENT GREEN, THE BLOB, or MONSTER FROM A PREHISTORIC PLANET.

This summer, a new Godzilla movie from Toho stomps into theaters, offering a decidedly different take on everyone's favorite monster, while King Kong is back on Skull Island in a new theme-park attraction at Universal Orlando. Audiences will have to wait until 2020 before the promised, big-screen rematch of GODZILLA VS. KONG arrives from Legendary Pictures. And since we have no patience, we decided to pay tribute to 1962's KING KONG VS. GODZILLA in this issue, with fun cover art by classic kaiju artist Bob Eggleton and a compelling making-of article by Godzilla expert and author Steve Ryfle.

Additionally, I think we've lined up a good amount of fun content in this issue, from the summer movie excitement of SUICIDE SQUAD and family-friendly fare of KUBO AND THE TWO STRINGS and Disney's PETE'S DRAGON remake to a special preview of this fall's THE EXORCIST TV series and Retrospect interviews with John Carpenter on ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK and Terry Gilliam on TIME BANDITS.

But most importantly, we're gearing up for the celebration of what would have been FM founder Forrest J Ackerman's 100th birthday on November 24. This magazine and its mission owe everything to Forry, and in anticipation of his centennial we decided to whet your appetite with a primer on the man, the myth, the legend — accompanied by a stunning throwback cover by talented artist Paul Wee as a Comic-Con exclusive. Enjoy, and save the date for the festivities (including TALES FROM THE ACKER-MANSION and ALIEN CON on Halloween weekend, details within these pages)!

David Weiner
Executive Editor
@TikiAmbassador

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KING KONG VS GODZILLA cover art by Bob Eggleton

SUICIDE SQUAD cover art by Brian Taylor

FORREST J ACKERMAN cover art by Paul Wee

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MONSTER MAIL CALL

Be part of the Manster Kid cammunity! Shore your thoughts obout the new ond/or vintoge Fomous Monsters, os well os your fiendishly fond manster memaries with us at:

FANGMAIL@FAMOUSMONSTERS.COM
(an Faceboak or Twitter use #FangMail)

You moy find yourself in our next issue!



MARVEL MEMORIES

Dear Fang Mail, I enjoyed the movie article on CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR (FM #285) as well as the ensuing article on "Marvel Monster Comics." Have always enjoyed them since I was a kid (as well as your mag)... manster camic books/horrar in the Marvel Way/just how I like them. Thank you *Famous Monsters of Filmland* for bringing back some old memaries.

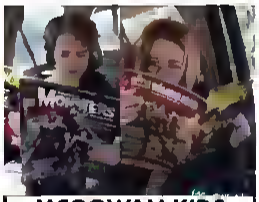
Juan Perez
Corpus Creepy, TX

FM FASCINATION

Wow! What a beautiful GAME OF THRONES cover! I am a big fan of GAME OF THRONES so I enjoyed this issue very much. Learned so much. Keep it up with the Forrest J Ackerman feature. I love looking at the stills. What great memories. *Famous Monsters* #285 was an issue that I could not put down and I am also a big fan of PHANTASM. I remember watching the first movie and was fascinated with those flying silver balls. Thank you for The Tall Man, bad axx cover, and enjoyed the feature!

Paul Dale Roberts
Elk Grove, CA

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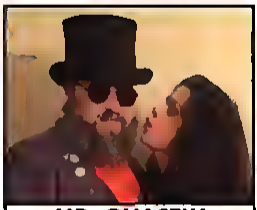
MCGOWAN KIDS

SHARING IS CARING

I discovered FM as a nine-year-old in 1975. The incredible GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD cover art by Ken Kelly on #117 drew me in and I was hooked for life. Fast forward to 2016, and I am naw sharing my enduring love for imagi-mavies with my own children; Nara, age 11, and Aidan, age 9. Thanks for putting aut a magazine I can feel gaad about sharing with my kids and that carries the same sense of wonder established by Uncle Farry. Yau've enabled me to share an impartant piece af my childhood with my awn children! FM cantinues to be essential reading for Monster Kids af every generation!

George McGowan
(with Nara ond Aidan McGowon)
Eagon, MN

WANTED! More Readers Like



MR. GHASTLY

As a little manster growing up in the backwoods of Tennessee, I was introduced to *Famous Monsters* with issue #180 (It was the Frankenstein cover that caught my evil eye)..... I was the epitome af a Monster Kid through the '80s and into the '90s and onward thru today. I was that go-to guy when someone wanted to know what actor storred in so-and-so horror flick ar how many sequels a particular franchise had.....

With a stack of back issues and a now-growing collectian of FM in hand, I was inspired to pick up a decades-lang dream that I'd had since watching Sir Cecil Creape an the telly back when I lived in TN. I wanted to become a horror host! Long story short, I grabbed an 8-ball cane, a top hat, some horrar shirts that I had lying araund, and proceeded to build a set in my basement. Thus MR. GHASTLY'S CREEPATORIUM was barn. It's slow going getting videos aut on YauTube because I have a family af little monsters af my own (and an awesome wife wha is my 8nde af Ghastly as seen in the attached photo), but I want to thank the return of *Famous Monsters* for giving me the kick in the rear to start living ane af my Monster Kid dreams!

Scott "Mr. Ghastly" West
Eerie, PA



FAMOUS MONSTER KID: JOHN CARPENTER

Monster Kid

(man-stər-kid) *adj., n.*

1. A monster fan stemming from the horror-flick boom of the late '50s and '60s
2. A collector of monster toys, kits, goodies, and memorabilia
3. A longtime fan of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine

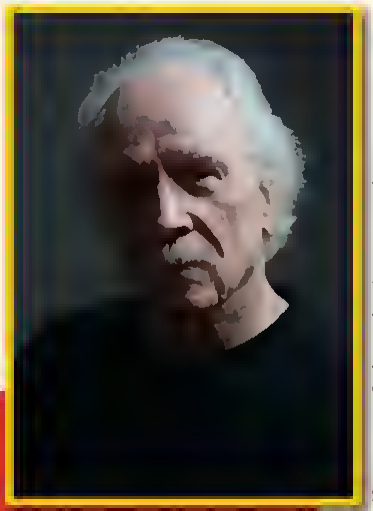


Photo Courtesy of Kyle Cassidy © Storm King Productions

"Forry was just a guy who loved science fiction, fantasy, and horror. *Loved it. Ate it. Breathed it.*"

There's no question that veteran filmmaker John Carpenter has had a massive impact on big-screen storytelling, straddling genres with a laundry list of memorable and arguably iconic films that include DARK STAR, ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13, HALLOWEEN, THE FOG, ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, THE THING, CHRISTINE, STARMAN, BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA, and THEY LIVE.

Given the types of films that he prefers to make, it should come as no surprise that Carpenter was a fan of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine as a kid — his imagination, like so many others of his generation and subsequent ones, fueled by the amazing images culled from Forry Ackerman's impressive, unmatched collection of classic horror and Sci-Fi stills. "There's no real way to estimate the kind of influence that Forrest Ackerman had on those of us who grew up in the 1950s and '60s and '70s with *Famous Monsters*," says Carpenter. "There's just no way to emphasize how much he meant to the genre audience."

Providing some context for those who weren't around during the magazine's heyday, Carpenter reflects, "*Famous Monsters* had an enormous impact. It was huge. Because at the time, you see, there was no such thing as a youth culture. We didn't have anything like that. But we had horror movies. We had monster movies, to be more specific. And they were beloved. That was our youth culture. And *Famous Monsters* was the magazine all about it. It had announcements of future movies — sometimes they came true, sometimes they didn't — and those corny, awful jokes, which was part of the charm of Forrest Ackerman. And I ate it up."

Like so many who laud the virtues of the magazine during the Monster Kid era, Carpenter offers that FM fed the notion to all who read it that, "There's somebody else out there who loves this stuff as much as I do. And that made me, made all of us at that time — I think I can speak for the generation — feel great. We didn't feel alone."

It's only fitting that the Master of Horror would hold the press junket for his 1980 horror movie THE FOG in none other than Forry's home, aka the Ackermansion. He recalls, "I remember Forrest Ackerman very fondly. He was a very, very sweet man, and I remember meeting his wife [Wendayne], who was very sweet. And he was just so kind. He took me downstairs and showed me all his memorabilia down there, and he was very proud of everything."

Contemplating the enormous collection and the wealth of knowledge Forry had to accompany it, the director points out, "He was not a pretentious man. I never saw him as a guy who put himself out as an expert on anything. He was just a guy who *loved* what he did. Somebody who loved the genre probably as much as anybody, and just loved supporting new filmmakers. He was just a guy who loved science fiction, fantasy, and horror. *Loved it. Ate it. Breathed it.*"

Carpenter chuckles to himself once again. "And he was so corny. Good God. It was stunning."

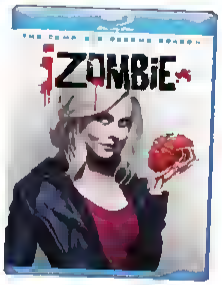
More with John Carpenter on ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, HALLOWEEN, and his new comics, starting on page 46.

FM PICKS

MOVIES and TV

Hot! Hot! Hot! Summer's in full bloze, the perfect excuse to go out ond ploy ond then stoy indoors to consume entertoinment while keeping cool. Here ore o few fun recommendotions for movies, TV, books, videogomes, comics, podcosts, ond toys for the dog doys of the seoson!

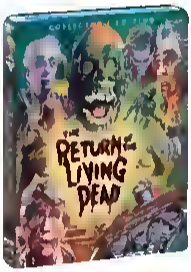
iZOMBIE



Relive every delicious moment of Season 2 of The CW's hit undead series. While Liv (Rose McIver) continues to solve crimes, Major hos to process what it means that his ex-fioncée is deod. Bonus material includes deleted scenes ond the 2015 iZOMBIE Comic-Con panel.

warnerbros.com

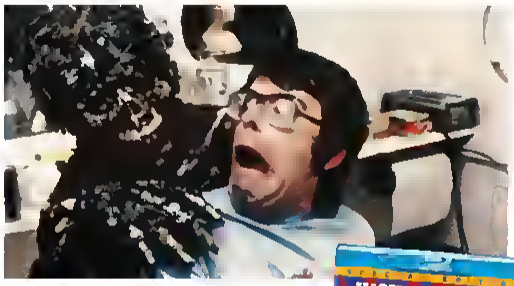
THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

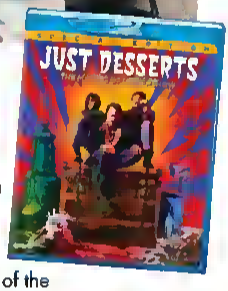


Shout! Factory knows we can't get enough zombies so it's repackoged the acclaimed 1985 film with so many extros your brain could burst. Twa discs include bonuses like commentory from the director and the cast, trailers, countless featurettes, and zombie subtitles (!).

shoutfactory.com

JUST DESSERTS: THE MAKING OF CREEPSHOW

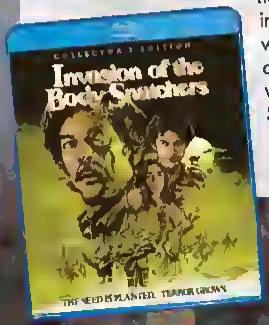




Go behind the scenes of George A. Romero's cult classic with this documentary, which was originally created as a bonus for a U.K. release of the comedic horror anthology. It features interviews with Romero, horror legend Stephen King (who wrote the script and even stars in one of the vignettes!), FX maestro Tom Savini, and several of the actors; on-set footage; a 1982 promotional segment; and many more perks "to tide you over."

synopse-films.com

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS



The 1978 remake of the 1956 classic is o classic in its own right and Shout! Factory is giving it the collector's edition it deserves. Donald Sutherland and Brooke Adams star as Department of Health workers who discover aliens have come to Earth and are cloning humans. Extras include interviews with Adams, the writer, and the composer; a featurette with interviews with director Philip Kaufman, Sutherland, and others; and commentary by Kaufman.

shoutfactory.com



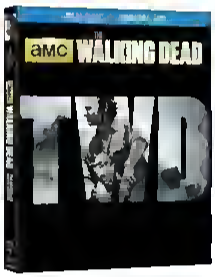


THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI ACROSS THE 8TH DIMENSION

The 1984 Sci-Fi-comedy-adventure is a bona fide cult classic and it gets the collector's treatment from Shout! Factory. Peter Weller stars as the titular adventurer with a golden supporting cast including Jeff Goldblum, Ellen Barkin, John Lithgow, and Christopher Lloyd. Among the extras are a featurette, a feature-length (2 1/2 hours!) documentary with cast and crew interviews, deleted scenes, commentary from the director and writer, and an alternate opening with none other than Jamie Lee Curtis!

Out Aug. 16 • shoutfactory.com

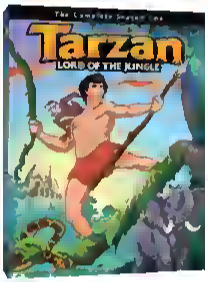
THE WALKING DEAD: COMPLETE SEASON SIX



Whether you loved the cliffhanger finale or found it to be intensely frustrating, Season 6 of THE WALKING DEAD was a roller coaster ride. Revisit it in all of its gory glory on Blu-ray. Brains never looked so good! Special features include commentary and deleted and extended scenes.

Out Aug. 23 • anchorbayentertainment.com

TARZAN, LORD OF THE JUNGLE: COMPLETE SEASON ONE



The classic Filmation '70s animated series is on home video for the very first time, nicely timed to the jungle man's latest big-screen adventure with Alexander Skarsgård and Margot Robbie as the iconic Tarzan and Jane. A cerebral cartoon adhering more closely to Edgar Rice Burroughs' original creation than most adaptations, all 16 episodes from the first season are together in a special 2-disc set.

wornerbros.com

10 CLOVERFIELD LANE



This acclaimed paranoid thriller (not quite a sequel to the J.J. Abrams-produced 2008 found-footage horror film, but kind of like a companion cousin) about a woman trapped in an underground bunker with two men who claim the surface is no longer livable was a big hit this winter. The Blu-ray combo pack has extras like commentary by director Dan Trachtenberg and producer Abrams, and more than 30 minutes of behind-the-scenes footage, including a tour of the bunker, how the scores were created for each character, and how the film went from script to production.

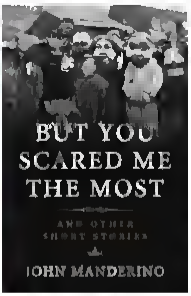
paramount.com



BOOKS



BUT YOU SCARED ME THE MOST



This collection of 26 short stories by John Manderino offers modern takes on many classic monsters, including Dracula, Frankenstein, the Wolfman, and the Mummy. Not necessarily intended to scare, many of the selections are amusing, sad, or disturbing. For example, in "Bigfoot Tells All," the hirsute behemoth reveals he's just a painfully shy introvert. Likened to THE TWILIGHT ZONE in theme and tone, Manderino's anthology conjures the dark heart of the human condition with pathos and wit.

chicagoreviewpress.com



GRIS GRIMLY'S TALES FROM THE BROTHERS GRIMM



Following takes on PINOCCHIO, FRANKENSTEIN, and THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW, Los Angeles–based author and illustrator Gris Grimly turns his macabre sensibilities to some of the darkest tales of all time: those told by the Brothers Grimm. Adhering faithfully to the original text (many of which have been watered down through retellings over the years), Grimly pulls no punches with art that is whimsical, sinister, and fantastical.

grisgrimly.com

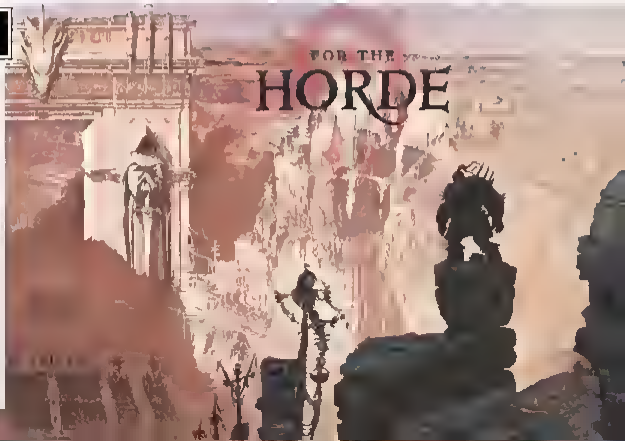


WARCRAFT: BEHIND THE DARK PORTAL

Based on the highest-grossing role-playing videogame in history, Duncan Jones' cinematic adaptation of WARCRAFT is full of jaw-dropping effects that were painstakingly created for the utmost realism. Take a behind-the-scenes look at how those effects were realized with Daniel Wallace's coffee-table book, which is filled with concept art, unit photography, and in-depth interviews with Jones, the cast, and the crew.



horpercollins.com



Guillermo del Toro:

AT HOME WITH MONSTERS & STUDIES IN THE HORROR FILM

By Gerry Gallo

As filmmaker and FM fave Guillermo del Toro dives into production on his next film, THE SHAPE OF WATER, a new book of in-depth essays studying two of his most haunting movies, THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE and PAN'S LABYRINTH, and a traveling museum exhibit of some of his awe-inspiring collectibles from Bleak House, AT HOME WITH MONSTERS, will tide over fans until they can drink in his next big-screen endeavor.

The incredibly busy filmmaker graciously took time to talk with FM about the new book, out now, and the exhibit, which debuts at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in August.

GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE AND PAN'S LABYRINTH: STUDIES IN THE HORROR FILM is packed with thoughtful essays and insightful interviews with the writer-director and many of the incredible talents involved with the projects. The book was edited by Daniel Olson, who previously edited the impressive and thorough STANLEY KUBRICK'S THE SHINING: STUDIES IN THE HORROR FILM.



GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE & PAN'S LABYRINTH STUDIES IN THE HORROR FILM is available at centipedepress.com

"Sometimes I'm very pleased to find that people are reading the movies the way I consciously wrote them, and then I'm very surprised and happy that other people — for good or for bad, I don't care — interpret them differently," says del Toro. "They are my movies only insofar that I made them. But they are now public for anyone to try an interpretation that enriches the movies as an experience for them." He adds, "Some of the essays are quite brilliant in terms of speaking about the movies in the context of social and historical war. ... DEVIL'S BACKBONE and PAN'S LABYRINTH really examine tragic situations juxtaposed through a prism of childhood and innocence."

It's no secret that del Toro was a huge fan of FM's founder and legendary collector Forrest J Ackerman, and he took an inspirational cue from Forry when he built Bleak House, his shrine to imagination. "[Bleak House] has Forry in spirit — in fact, right at the entrance there's a portrait of Forry, and a little statuette of Forry, and a portrait that he gave me. He is my patron saint for that house." He continues, "I made a point that ... I'm not going to buy anything that cannot be displayed. Because I remember how joyful it was to stumble upon a shelf at Forry's and find a skeleton of a brontosaurus from KONG next to the melting face of Dorian Gray by Dick Smith."

Singling out some of his favorites on display in AT HOME WITH MONSTERS, del Toro reveals, "There's a fantastic, seven-foot-tall Frankenstein's Monster head by Mike Hill. ... It's gigantic! It's a giant head floating on a wall staring at you. ... Then there's a life-sized Ray Harryhausen playing with the skeletons from JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS. There's a beautiful, life-sized sculpture of H.P. Lovecraft. ... All in all it's about 470 objects, which represent the tip of the iceberg for Bleak."



A companion book from Insight Editions, GUILLERMO DEL TORO: AT HOME WITH MONSTERS — INSIDE HIS FILMS, NOTEBOOKS, AND COLLECTIONS, is the perfect accompaniment to the exhibition, detailing the items on display and delving further into the director's world with an exclusive in-depth interview and commentary from notables in the art world. The exhibit runs at LACMA from August 1–November 27, 2016, before moving on to the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and the Minneapolis Museum of Art (MIA).



Follow Guillermo del Toro on Twitter *@RealGDT*





GUILLERMO DEL TORO: AT HOME WITH MONSTERS — INSIDE HIS FILMS, NOTEBOOKS, AND COLLECTIONS is available at insighteditions.com

PODCAST

MONSTER PARTY

Join Comic-Con–hardened horror/Sci-Fi nerds James Ganis, Shawn Sheridan, Larry Strothe, and Matt Weinhold as they drink one too many while arguing about everything monstrous in pop culture. Clever, lively, informative, and often hilarious, this quartet of creatures has tackled topics ranging from seismic Hollywood game changers to B-movie production horror stories. Past guests include such funny folks and genre faves as Tom Holland, Denise Crosby, Oscar Nuñez, Tim Thomerson, C. Courtney Joyner, Lisa Langlois, William Lustig, Greg Proops, Bobby Slayton, Dana Gould — and FM editor David Weiner!

On iTunes ond monsterportypodcost.libsyn.com



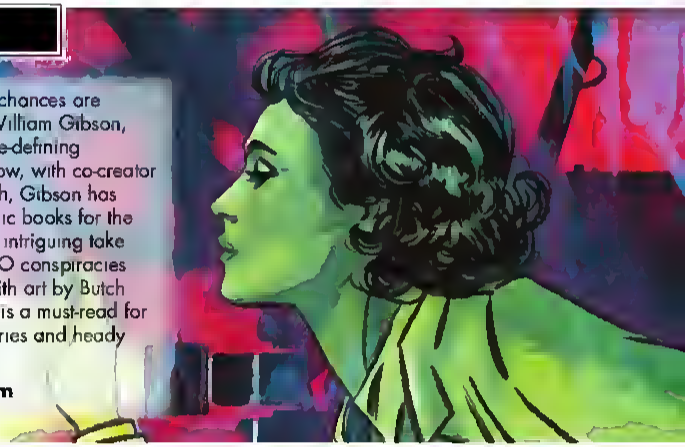
COMICS

ARCHANGEL



If you're a Sci-Fi fan, chances are you're familiar with William Gibson, who penned the genre-defining NEUROMANCER. Now, with co-creator Michael St. John Smith, Gibson has made the leap to comic books for the very first time with an intriguing take on time travel and UFO conspiracies in Nazi Germany. With art by Butch Guice, ARCHANGEL is a must-read for fans of alternate histories and heady science fiction.

IDWpublishing.com



VIDEOGAMES

7 DAYS TO DIE

How long will you survive in a post-apocalyptic world populated by the undead? With over two million digital downloads for PC, 7 DAYS TO DIE finally comes to PlayStation 4 and Xbox One owners. 7 DAYS TO DIE is an open-world, first-person shooter that combines survival horror, tower defense, and role-playing experiences against what feels like a never-ending horde of zombies. Craft weapons and gear, take over ruins, and fortify your defenses, or cooperate in two-player split-screen mode with your friends.

7doystodie.com



TOYS

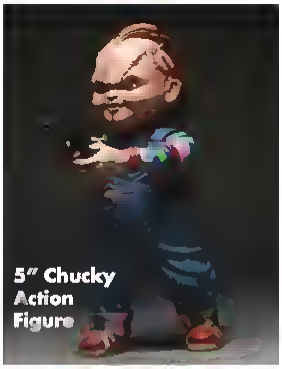
CHUCKY

You and Chucky can be friends till the end with a new line of CHILD'S PLAY dolls from Mezco Toyz. There's a 5-inch action figure that comes with not just a gun and a knife, but two sets of arms!; a 15-inch Good Guys doll featuring Chucky before the soul of Charles Lee Ray — the serial killer known as the "Lakeshore Strangler" — was injected into it (it looks surprisingly innocent), and there's even a 15-inch version of Chucky's bride, Tiffony, who comes with her wedding dress, TIFF necklace, and leather jacket, and speaks six different phrases from the film. If you would rather be Chucky compared to just playing with him, there's also an adult-size mask made of vacuformed plastic. Scaring the kids this Halloween just got easier — and way more fun! Check out the site for more dolls!

mezcotoyz.com

Adult size Chucky Mask





5" Chucky Action Figure



15" Talking Good Guys Chucky



6" Good Guys Vinyl Figure



15" Talking Tiffany

SUICIDE SQUAD

Everyone's got their own favorite member of the Suicide Squad, and thanks to Funko and Rubie's Costume Company you can own — or even be — any and all of them. Funko gives the Pop! treatment to our favorite anti-heroes so you can keep on eye on The Joker or Boomerang an your desk, while Rubie's is selling costumes that are pitch-perfect renditions of what we see onscreen. You can be Harley Quinn for Halloween, complete with makeup, rainbow wig, and weapons! There's even a latex light-up mask of Deadshot and an overhead latex mask of Killer Croc!

funko.com and rubies.com



Deadshot Gauntlets



Funko Pop! Suicide Vinyl Figures



Killer Croc and Deadshot Masks

"ALL IS FORGIVEN!"

Monstrous offspring Sara Karloff and Don Watkins make an historic return to "Frankenstein Lake."

By David Colton



For 85 years, the exact location of one of the most infamous scenes in horror-movie history has been known to only a few.

Hidden 38 miles northwest of Los Angeles, the secluded Malibou Lake is framed gently by the Santa Monica Mountains, just as it was in 1931 when FRANKENSTEIN director James Whale ordered Boris Karloff to throw "little Maria" into the water.

Karloff didn't want his Monster to kill a little girl. But Whale insisted. So did the Depression-era stage mother of seven-year-old Marilyn Harris. "Throw her in again!" the mother yelled when another take was needed.

The pivotal sequence — the confused Monster thinks Maria will float like a daisy — was so shocking that women fainted at previews. The drowning was not shown for more than 50 years.

It took monster sleuthing by film historian Gregory Mank to track down actress Marilyn Harris — and find the lake — in 1997. Harris, who died in 1999, cherished playing the loving and trusting Maria.

All this was a prelude to a remarkable reunion of actual Monster Kids this past April, as Boris Karloff's daughter, Sara, and Don Watkins, the son of Marilyn Harris, made a pilgrimage to the exact spot where the controversial scene was filmed.

The two had never met. Watkins helped break the ice. "All is forgiven," he said wryly.

Both offspring grew silent at "Frankenstein Lake." The mountain backdrop looked much the same; the shoreline interrupted only by a small wooden dock.

"It actually gives me chills to think of my mom, and being here," Watkins said softly.





LEFT: Sara Karloff and Don Watkins hold a photo of their folks' famous scene. ABOVE: True Monster Kids with the symbolic daisies.

"I don't float, so don't throw me in," Karloff laughed. "I don't want closure." She added, "It's really a remarkable experience when you think about it."

The event was organized by FRANKENSTEIN scholar Pierre Fournier, author of the Rondo Award-winning blog, *Frankenstenia*, with help from local historian Brian Rooney. Horror historian David J. Skal accompanied the group.

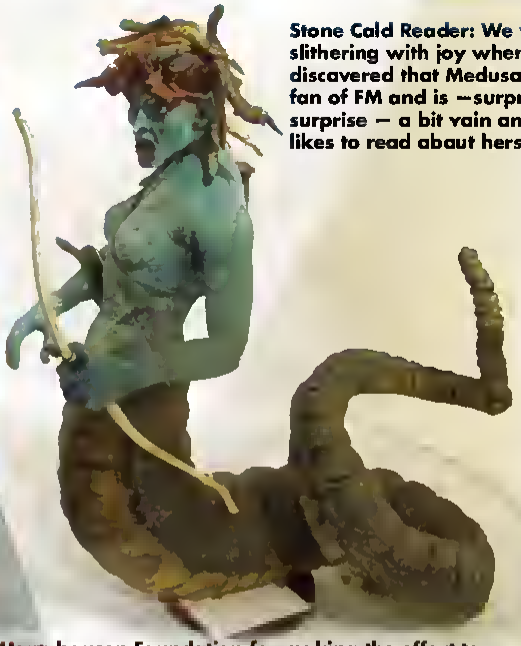
"You honor us with your presence," Fournier told Karloff and Watkins. "This is a special place."

Fournier produced three daisies. "This one represents Boris," he said. "This one is for the bravest little girl in the world," he told Watkins. The third daisy is "for all the fans."

The daisies were tossed into the lake, floating as they did in the film, the sun glinting in the water.

Skal surely spoke for all when he commented, "This is goose-bumpy."





Stone Cold Reader: We were slithering with joy when we discovered that Medusa is a fan of FM and is —surprise, surprise — a bit vain and likes to read about herself.

But seriously, HUGE thanks to the Ray & Diana Harryhausen Foundation for making the effort to arrange this special treat for us — and for CLASH OF THE TITANS fans on the film's 35th anniversary — an original piece from the film!

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SPECIAL PREVIEW

LEVITATING EXORCIST FOR TV

BY ABBIE BERNSTEIN

THE EXORCIST is back, but it's not what you think it is. Show star Geena Davis and pilot director Rupert Wyatt, alongside writer/exec producer Jeremy Slater and co-stars Ben Daniels, Alfonso Herrera, and Hannah Kasulka, give FM a special preview of what could be the scariest show on television this fall.

FOX Network's new adaptation of William Peter Blatty's novel THE EXORCIST is not a remake of director William Friedkin's 1973 hit horror film. Rather, the new EXORCIST takes place 40 years later. In Chicago, Geena Davis' character Angela Rance becomes convinced that one of her college-age daughters is possessed. Despite being agnostic, Angela goes to family priest Father Tomas (Alfonso Herrera) for help. Father Tomas has doubts, but when he begins having visions of a catastrophic earlier exorcism conducted by Father Marcus (Ben Daniels), Tomas enlists the reluctant, more experienced man to get to the truth.

At a screening and cocktail party for THE EXORCIST in Hollywood, Davis laughs when asked if she intended a return to horror after her work in THE FLY. "All part of my master plan," she jokes. "I didn't even think about that. They just offered me the part, and I thought, 'Ooh, that's cool.' And read the script, loved it, and wanted to be a part of it. That's something that's very appealing about horror, is when it seems just like the normal world, but something supernatural starts happening."

Angela already has problems, as her husband Henry is clearly struggling with a debilitating illness. Speaking from Angela's point of view, Davis notes, "I think there's a big confluence of things happening in my life that are very stressful and difficult to deal with — my daughter being in a car accident that had a fatality in it, and my husband having these mental

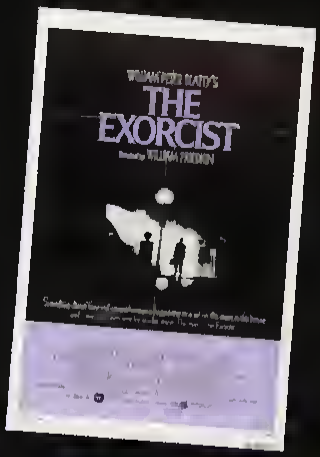
problems, so it's not a great time to also have one of your children possessed."

More seriously, the veteran star adds, "I'm so lucky that I've been able to be in so many genres. I've never been typecast. I've been able to be in so many things, including a really cool horror movie. So, yeah, it's fun to do that on TV now. I think it's a great opportunity."

REMAKE AVERSION

Other people involved in the new EXORCIST did not initially see it that way. Jeremy Slater, who adapted the material for television and is one of the series' executive producers, describes his reaction when production company Morgan Creek first approached him about three years ago with the notion of doing an EXORCIST remake. "I told them, 'No one should remake the original. I don't want to do that, and you shouldn't either. The original film is a little bit untouchable.' And then I hung up the phone and thought about it for a few minutes, and I was like, 'I don't want to remake the film, but what if you had a modern story with new characters?' And that got me very excited, and I called them back. In a way, I took the job to keep anyone else from remaking THE EXORCIST. We took it out as a pitch and shopped it everywhere in town, and FOX was by far the most enthusiastic. They got the concept of the show right off the bat."

> "The real exorcists' belief of possession is, when your will is broken, you're opening yourself up to let evil in."
> — Rupert Wyatt





LEFT: Think Geena Davis and Alfonsa Herrera should investigate that noise in the attic? ABOVE: The original 1973 EXORCIST poster.

Slater's fellow executive producer, pilot director Rupert Wyatt (RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES), tells FM that he was also skeptical at the outset. "When I was first approached with the script, I said no twice before reading it, for all the reasons that I think a lot of the critics of the show, before seeing the show, might have, which are valid. Why remake a classic, what many think is the greatest horror film of all time? It's only when I read the script did I realize, 'Hang on, this is no remake. It sits within the same world. There are many things that we can follow on from. But at the end of the day, it's an entirely fresh approach, a fresh story, and one that sits in the modern day."

On reading Slater's teleplay, Wyatt relates, "I thought it was a terrifically written script, structurally very strong, with new characters and a different storyline. So all of that, combined with this idea of evil as it is in our world today, and how we perceive evil, and how it can creep into our lives — the violence within Midwestern cities like Chicago, or the corruption within politics — all of those things that I think the series is going to evolve to explore were very appealing."

Actor Daniels says he, too, at first had reservations. "THE EXORCIST is my favorite horror movie of all time. I'm a big horror film freak, so I was quite apprehensive when it popped into my in-box. I was like, 'What are they going to do?' It's such a sacred movie for horror fans." Like Wyatt, Daniels was won over by the writing. Asked if he'd describe his Father Marcus as more Father Merrin or Father Karras from the original film, Daniels replies, "Neither. He's his own man, and I can't wait to see where they're going to take him. They were very inclusive and allowed me a lot of input into creating the character. So he comes from a pretty brutal background. He has a language, as you've seen, with a gun. And he's a fascinating character."

When we first meet Vatican representative Father Bennett, played by Kurt Egyiawan, Father Marcus pulls a gun

> "Something that's very appealing about horror is when it seems just like the normal world, something supernatural starts happening."
>
> — Geena Davis



on him. Egyiawan teases, "He and Marcus have got a lot of beef and a lot of history, and we'll see where that goes." Bennett's motives are unclear, and Egyiawan observes, "The way he looks at his job is that it's a little bit like a politician. He's trying to make sure that the people he works for are represented properly, the name of the church is represented properly, and with certain people, making sure that they're doing their jobs, and representing those they work for in a good light. So it's a little dubious with him how much is spiritual, how much is political, how much is ambition." Egyiawan offers that he first saw the original EXORCIST film only about a year ago. "I was too scared before that," he laughs. "I think it's not just a great horror film, it's a great drama and the characters are so intriguing, the acting's fantastic. I loved it."

Herrera says that he, too, loves the original EXORCIST, but is likewise excited about the series. Regarding how he sees Father Tomas, he says, "I think he's a great seeker. He has a little bit of ego, he likes recognition. Because of that, all of this [his involvement with exorcism] starts to happen."

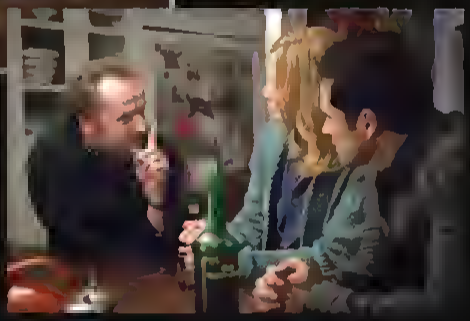
Hannah Kasulka, who plays one of Angela's two daughters, still has not seen the original EXORCIST. "I'm very scared of horror stuff. It's hard for me to even watch this that I'm in, and I was there [during filming], and it still scares me," Kasulka says with a laugh. "So it's kind of funny that this is the job that I end up with. My family was very Christian and I was raised that way and I wasn't allowed to watch horror movies or anything like that. I'm going to see [the EXORCIST film] now. I didn't want to watch it before I did the pilot, because I didn't want it to influence me."

A DEVELOPING STORY

Making THE EXORCIST as a weekly TV series is a huge challenge, Slater acknowledges. "I wouldn't know how to write a procedural show if you put a gun to my head. I think the day that you start writing episodes of the show where your two priests are teaming up to go investigate Bigfoot or the Jersey Devil, you've done something very, very wrong along the way. The idea was really to approach this the same way BREAKING BAD or MAD MEN would, where every season is basically a ten-hour movie, broken down. So it's heavily serialized. Our first season is this story of this one possession, but as the season goes along, you're going to see that there are much larger forces at work. The show is bigger than just the story of one possessed girl



> "As the season goes along, you're going to see that there are much larger forces at work."
>
> — Jeremy Slater



OPPOSITE: A familiar sight as THE EXORCIST locks on target. RIGHT: Director Rupert Wyatt directs Davis and Herrera in the pilot episode.

and the two priests trying to save her. The idea is to really build in a rich, deep mythology, because my favorite shows of all time are LOST and BREAKING BAD and [the reboot of] BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. You want that show that has an engine that can run for years and years, and constantly be surprising you."

Slater praises Wyatt's approach to bringing his teleplay to life. "Rupert was and remains an amazing collaborator. He's by far the best director I've ever worked with. He's smart and he's passionate. He's been so protective of our original vision, but at the same time, he's brought so much to the table in terms of getting these great performances, but also a lot of amazing visual images and energy. He brought us our director of photography, Alex Disenhof, who's Hollywood's great undiscovered secret. We're hopeful that Rupert's going to be able to come back and direct a couple more episodes for us this season, because he really is the best."

THE REAL EXORCISTS

Wyatt says that he was often surprised by what he learned in researching THE EXORCIST. "We reached out to a number of exorcists, but by their very definition, they're kind of like the James Bonds of the Catholic Church — they don't respond," he laughs. "We met with one Catholic priest — it was hard to judge whether he had conducted exorcisms himself. He said the reason why it's very important that exorcists keep a low profile is because they can be stalked by people who are mentally ill or people who have family or friends who are suffering from alcoholism or drug addiction, and misconstrue their conditions as something else."

Still, Wyatt continues, "This particular priest gave us a lot of insight into the world [of church-sanctioned exorcism] and how it operates and has proliferated in the last few years. It's been, I guess you could say, a dirty secret of the Catholic Church for a number of years. Only recently have they actually started to expand the number of exorcists. I think it's gone from a dozen or two to a hundred or so worldwide in the last few years. And they had a lot of reasons behind that. The state of the world today, the wars in the Middle East — there's a lot of displacement of Catholic families that happen to be [in the Middle East] and that's having a knock-on effect in terms of the institution itself, and the proliferation of broken will. Essentially, their belief of possession is, when your will is broken, you're opening yourself up to let evil in."

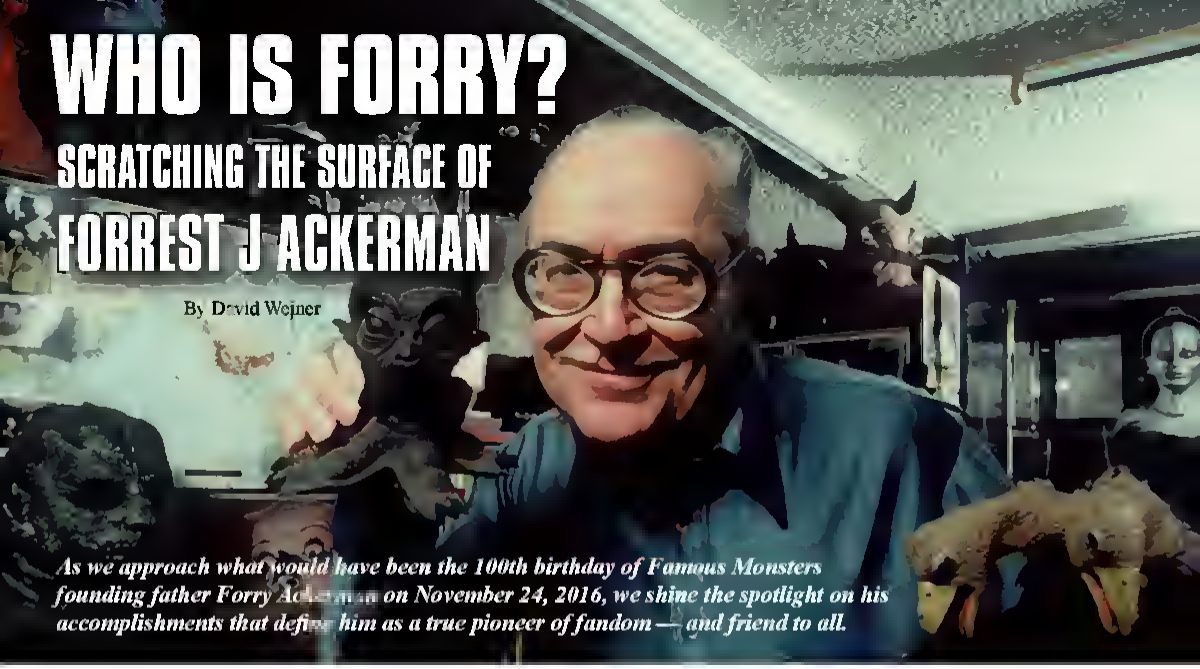
While the television show THE EXORCIST is its own story, there are nods to the 1973 film in the series' imagery, music, and at one point a newspaper clipping. Slater concludes, "The newspaper clipping is our little way of saying, 'Don't worry, guys, the original movie still took place.' It's our little hat tip that it's the same world, it's the same universe, but this is 40 years later, and let's see how evil's plan has progressed in the last 40 years. Let's see what they're ultimately heading toward."

THE EXORCIST premieres September 23 on FOX.

WHO IS FORRY?

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE OF FORREST J ACKERMAN

By David Wejner



As we approach what would have been the 100th birthday of Famous Monsters founding father Forry Ackerman on November 24, 2016, we shine the spotlight on his accomplishments that define him as a true pioneer of fandom — and friend to all.

The late Forrest J Ackerman, "Forry" to his friends, would have turned 100 years young this November. During his life, his boundless enthusiasm for imaginative storytelling and equal abhorrence of injustice and the clowns of politics led him to be a proactive citizen with utopian ideals, progressive ideas, stalwart integrity, and an enviable accessibility.

The founding father of fandom who coined the word "Sci-Fi," Ackerman proudly would recount again and again how, as a young boy in 1926, Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* magazine "jumped off the newsstand" and grabbed ahold of him. It was there and then that his love affair with the fantastic truly began. An early advocate of the universal language of Esperanto, Ackerman's eccentricity unwittingly sparked a movement when he attended 1939's first World Science Fiction Convention dressed as a man from the 25th century, inspired by the H.G. Wells film THINGS TO COME. The next time around, dozens emulated the trend he had set, paving the way for the groundswell movement of cosplayers who permeate Comic-Con today. It's a shame that so many of the huge San Diego event's participants don't realize that much of what embodies the fabric of "nerd culture" was essentially pioneered by Forry.

A writer, editor, literary agent, sometime actor, and all-around film fan, Forry's proclivity for the curiosities of life was infectious; his sense of humor was legendary, and he knew his way around a pun like Dracula knew his way around a jugular.

Over the course of his lifetime, the self-proclaimed "Ackermonster" amassed an amazing collection of books, pulp magazines, art, and movie memorabilia — hundreds of thousands of science fiction- and fantasy-related items — enough to fill a museum, which he unsuccessfully tried to secure before his death. It was often said that Forry never threw anything away, and anyone who stepped foot in his legendary 18-room "Ackermansion" in "Horrorwood, Karlofornia" could confirm that statement. Ackerman was overjoyed to share his collection, literally opening his home to the public to roam every room and drink it all in. countless thousands of visitors from around the globe made a pilgrimage at some point. Forry was famous for his accessibility; incredibly, he published his own phone number





1939: Farry sets off a casplay movement as a character from THINGS TO COME (right) at the World Science Fiction Convention.



(323-MOONFAN) in *Famous Monsters* in order to happily chat with fans at all hours.

I was one of the many fans who crossed the threshold of the Ackermansion in 1999, fittingly just a few days before Halloween. I was awed by not only the dense amount of artifacts and tomes he had amassed over the years, but by how personable "Uncle Forry" was to each and every visitor — and how trusting he was to let complete strangers roam his home, given the invaluable nature of his belongings. Among the myriad treasures on display were Bela Lugosi's DRACULA ring and the cape he wore in the 1930s stage production of his signature character; copies of Bram Stoker's DRACULA and Mary Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN that were each signed by the respective author; the model pterodactyl from the original KING KONG; a Martian invader ship from George Pal's WAR OF THE WORLDS; and Fritz Lang's monocle that he wore when he directed METROPOLIS — one of Forry's all-time favorite films.

Forry counted Pal and Lugosi among his friends, and kept good company with the likes of Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, and Boris Karloff. As a literary agent, he represented Ed Wood and L. Ron Hubbard among 200 other writers, and discovered Ray Bradbury, editing and publishing the celebrated author's first story. The two men remained tried-and-true friends 'til the end, often joined by Ray Harryhausen. Much like in Ackerman's formative years when he formed the first "Scientifiction" Club, these three amigos would often commune and share flights of fancy and fantasy.

But it was with *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine, started in 1958 with publisher James Warren, that Ackerman truly tapped into the zeitgeist of a burgeoning monster-mania revival in America and found a vehicle to inspire legions of unpressionable young dreamers. Regularly loaded with Forry's trademark punnery and gee-whiz awe of movie magic, the cheaply produced black-and-white pulp publication consistently grabbed newsstand bystanders by the throat with spectacular, colorful cover art painted by talented artists such as Basil Gogos, Ron Cobb, and Albert Nuetzell.

One of those dreamers touched by Ackerman's reach was a young Stephen King, whose first-ever story submitted for publication went straight to the editor's mailbox for a side Sci-Fi magazine Forry created called *Spacemen*. Of the immediate nostalgia many have experienced thinking back to that first issue of *Famous Monsters* they held in their hands, King perhaps described it best in *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* when he declared, "Ask anyone who has been associated with the fantasy-horror-science fiction genres in the last 30 years about this magazine and you'll get a laugh, a flash of the





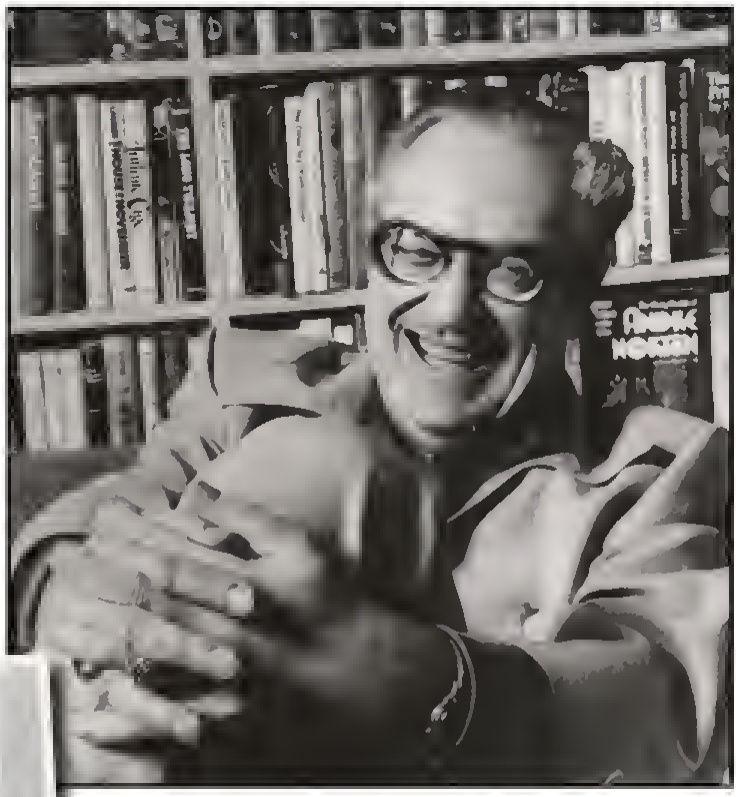


TOP: Forry with a fan. ABOVE: The early days of Forry's Monstrous collection. RIGHT: Forry's typewriter, the conduit for many a pun in *Famous Monsters*, which debuted in 1958.

eyes, and a stream of bright memories — I practically guarantee it." *Famous Monsters* was no simple magazine that young people appreciated. It was a life-changer. It remains a secret handshake among the transformed, each with their own personal tale to tell about how it rocked their world.

My personal connection with *Famous Monsters* goes back to my pre-teen years in the '70s, when the only things that mattered to me on a newsstand were *MAD* magazine and comic books. I had recently gone to a revival screening of THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD with my parents and was obsessed with all things Ray Harryhausen. That same week I visited a dime store and there on the rack, serendipitously, was the one beady eye of Ray's Cyclops staring back at me from the cover of *Famous Monsters* #118. Much like Forry and his *Amazing Stories* revelation, I, too, suddenly discovered a whole new voice that knew me intrinsically.

Many creative minds who went on to move and shake the entertainment industry as we know it credit *Famous Monsters* as a major influence. James Cameron used to hide issues behind his textbooks when he was ten. Guillermo del Toro's love for the periodical prompted him to learn English so that he could read every word. (He also wrote a letter as a boy to "Uncle Forry," asking if the kindly editor would be willing to adopt him, but that's another story.) The amount of talent who tip their hat to Forry and FM is truly astounding: Giants of the industry, including Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Peter Jackson, Tim Burton, Joe Dante, Mark Hamill, John Landis, Rick Baker, and Greg Nicotero, all gush over their childhood



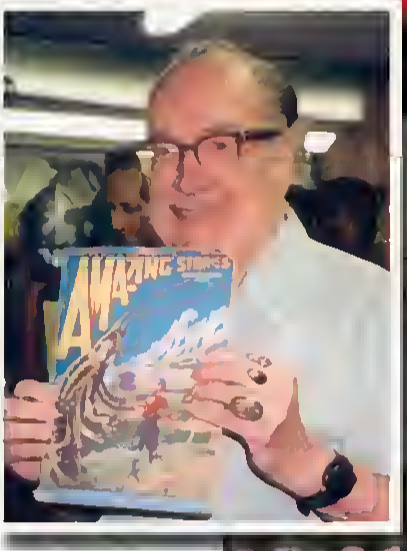




ABOVE: Forry with pal Boris Karloff. RIGHT: Caught between DRACULA Vs. FRANKENSTEIN in a cameo. OPPOSITE: Forry whispers sweet nothings to Linda Blair's EXORCIST head.







ABOVE LEFT: Forry flanked by Ray Harryhausen and Ray Bradbury. ABOVE RIGHT: Future FM editor David Weiner with Uncle Forry. LEFT: His first inspiration, *Amazing Stories*.

memories of the mag. And the story is always the same: They realized they were not alone. Ackerman created a welcoming, communal environment that was inclusive of every young reader who felt like an outcast, pariah, nerd, or neophyte due to their enviable intellect and/or left-of-center interests.

Ackerman's run as editor of *Famous Monsters* lasted 191 issues, until the magazine stopped publication in 1983. A controversial 1993 revival with new publisher Ray Ferry reunited Forry with the periodical but soon led to the editor's departure and much legal entanglement involving the mag's rights. In 2007, publisher Philip Kim legally picked up the rights to *Famous Monsters* and gave a third life to the embattled title with Forry's blessing. Amid the legal chaos, Ackerman experienced health issues and was sadly forced to auction off the majority of his collection to pay mounting bills. He passed away on December 4, 2009, at the age of 92. Interred with his loyal wife, Wendayne, who passed on in 1990, his burial plaque reads, "Sci-Fi Was My High," while hers reads, "Beloved Wife of Mr. Science Fiction."

Today, despite Ackerman's physical absence, *Famous Monsters* still thrives on newsstands amid a dwindling print market thanks to the dedicated love of longtime fans and enthralled newcomers looking to get unique insight into new and classic entries in the horror, Sci-Fi, fantasy, and pop-culture genres. Most importantly, it's the enduring nature of Forry's generous spirit, his love of cinema, and his respect for fans that continues to give our venerable magazine its genuine spark.

So, let's plan to raise a glass to Forrest J Ackerman on his centennial celebration this November. An optimist who aimed to live to 100, he often said of his legacy, "I hope to be remembered as an altruist who would have been an accepted citizen of Utopia." If only we all could be, Forry.

For more on the Forry Centennial, go to forryackerman.com

FORRY'S ACK!-IVES

We ore so hoppy to hear from so mony Manster Kids that they love Farry's Ackl-ives. We strive ta pick the anes that make us feel all mushy inside — in o terrifying woy, of course. As olwoys, for eoch issue we pick favorites from Forry's mossive collection of still!s that were often published in FM. Don't forget to reoch out ta us in "You Axed For It!" if you want to see something specific — we'll dig into the crypt ond see if we con find it!



LON CHANEY SHALL NOT DIE!



In response to yaur many, many requests that we show a picture of LON CHANEY os he *really* looked, we are pleased to present this portrait af The Man of o Thausand Faces at approximately age 39. For this splendid rare study of Mr. Monster in everyday life, we are indebted to Niels Augustin af Halland, wha sent it to us all the way from Amsterdam.





"Famous Monsters always brings out the Beast in me," confesses Jean Marais, star of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST "It's like a Grimm Fairy Tale illustrated with photos — that's the Beauty of it."



BODY SNATCHER Boris Karloff makes off with the bedding as he heads for the nearest laundromat to have his slightly moldy corpse dry-cleaned



Left to right: James Nicholson, President of American-International Pictures, Vol Warren, Farrest J Ackermon, Editor of Famous Monsters.

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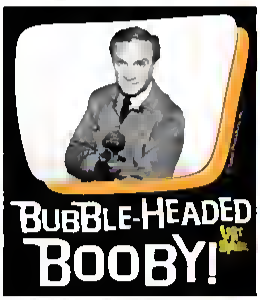
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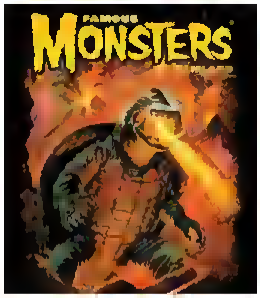
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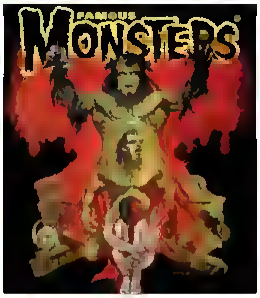
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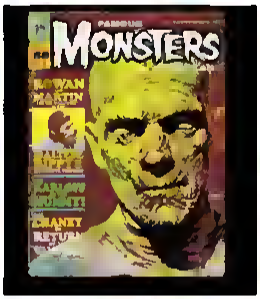
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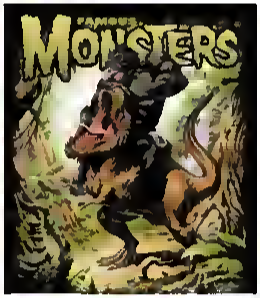
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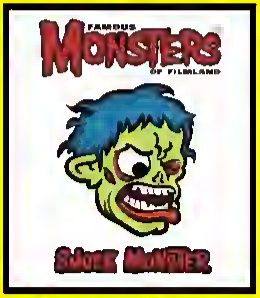
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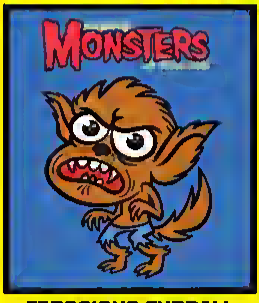
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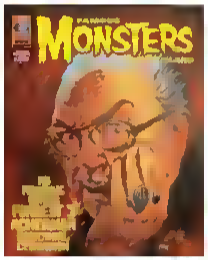
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DAVID AYER JAILBREAKS DC'S GREATEST VILLAINS

SQUAD GOALS

Tasked with keeping DC's extended movie universe on the right track after the polarized reception of BATMAN V SUPERMAN, David Ayer tells FM how his approach differs from the Zack Snyder–directed film, how the Squad truly bonded during the shoot — and the challenges of reinventing The Joker in the shadow of the character's memorable cinematic antecedents.

By David Weiner



DC Comics' all-star super-villain team

finally gets the big-screen treatment with this summer's SUICIDE SQUAD. Written and directed by David Ayer, whose credits include FURY, END OF WATCH, and TRAINING DAY, the film is executive-produced by Zack Snyder, Deborah Snyder, Colin Wilson, and Geoff Johns and further expands DC's extended movie universe beyond the broad efforts of BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE — with a decidedly cheekier tone.

The SUICIDE SQUAD premise is a playful twist on the superhero genre. An enigmatic, insuperable entity must be defeated. Rather than employ some of the world's mightiest superheroes, a U.S. intelligence officer recruits a squad of the world's most dangerous supervillains. Sprung from incarceration and armed with a formidable arsenal of weapons, the unpredictable group quickly figure out that they were chosen for their liability and expected failure — and must determine whether or not they should fulfill their expectations or die doing the right thing.

The casting lineup is impressive. Jared Leto as The Joker, Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn, Will Smith as Deadshot, Joel Kinnaman as Rick Flag, Jai Courtney as Boomerang, Cara Delevingne as Enchantress, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje as Killer Croc, Karen Fukuhara as Katana, Jay Hernandez as El Diablo, and Adam Beach as Slipknot. Viola Davis is Amanda Waller, the intelligence leader who keeps the Squad on a tight leash, and there's also a cameo appearance by Ben Affleck's Batman. Scott Eastwood and Ike Barinholz also star.

Read on for Ayer's insight on adapting the popular comic to the big screen, from turning Harley Quinn into a flesh-and-blood force majeure and directing Jared Leto when he was deep into character to addressing rumors that he had to reshoot portions of the film to lighten the tone.



ABOVE: David Ayer lines up his Deadshot with Will Smith. BELOW: Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje as Killer Croc and Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn.

Famous Monsters: Were you a comic-book geek or aficionado before the SUICIDE SQUAD opportunity arose? Was that title on your radar?

David Ayer: I grew up pre-Internet and I'd go to the library and they would have these anthologies of all the comics and I would just sit there for hours and just read everything cover to cover and just get lost in these worlds. ... It's funny, [SUICIDE SQUAD is] a little sophisticated, you know? It's kind of high-level stuff there. It was nice to go and look at it again and really get into the stories as I started developing the project. It was such a rich, insane, unique kind of voice in the comic world.

FM: Everyone always says that the villains have more fun. And now you actually get to play with the villains and turn them into heroes on celluloid. Where were you in terms of the ground level development of this project?

DA: They wanted to make a SUICIDE SQUAD movie and I heard about it, and I came in and pitched some ideas, and it started to make sense. It seemed like a good marriage, and so I ended up writing it — so it's kind of my baby. We started making the movie before we even had the script ready, so it's definitely kind of a product of my twisted mind.

"The characters are hilarious. I mean, you have a giant crocodile dude walking around, and a gum-smacking badass lady from Brooklyn with a baseball bat."



FM: There's a lot to shoulder when you have fan expectations and you're working from source material that is so beloved. How much of an effort was there to really be true to the SUICIDE SQUAD comics?

DA: I think it starts with reading a lot of the comics, and not just SUICIDE SQUAD, but BATMAN and DC Comics in general: understanding the different timelines, trying to figure out the crisis stuff. The New 52 has just gone through a lot of iterations, and there's a lot of continuity. But that's just mechanics at the end of the day, because it's really about understanding the characters. Once you can kind of crack the code for yourself on how they think, walk, talk, speak, it all kind of stems from character. ... Film is a different medium, and it's interesting because you have to engineer things

"It's definitely kind of a product of my twisted mind."





ABOVE: Jared Leto's Joker was tightly wrapped until now. OPPOSITE: Mr. J's full reveal. LEFT: Ayer discusses the finer points of bartending with Robbie.

for the camera. The comic world, you can just draw something and say, "Hey, it looks cool!" It's this 2D panel and it's really cool and graphic. But film is really unforgiving and it takes a lot of work and research just to make things work for a camera on a visual level, and to build things. So it's a much more complicated process, but at the same time I think it's important to capture the mythos, the flavor, the attitude of the comics. And as far as the plot of the movie, it's very much informed of the original. The [John] Ostrander SUICIDE SQUAD series, I grabbed some stuff out of there, characters, so it's very true to the world. But at the same time, it has to work as a movie, and I think it does both. I treated it as, "What if this was real?" It's a heightened reality, but at the same time I treated the characters like real people with real emotional lives. And there's a lot of humor and a lot of fun. For me, the best part of it was directing this incredible cast and helping them turn what started out as 2D drawings into living, breathing people with their own lives.

FM. How would you describe the tone of the film overall? Even though SUICIDE SQUAD is a stand-alone film for you that's been positioned by the trailers as an irreverent romp, it's part of the DC extended movie universe and coming off the heels of BATMAN V SUPERMAN, which has a very dark and serious tone. It's been reported that you did some reshoots, speculated to lighten the feel of the film to match the trailer's tone.

DA. Yeah, that's a rumor that I don't like, that I lightened the movie. It's always been what it was. We grabbed some more action, and sometimes if you cut a movie together, you need to simplify some stuff or make your point in a better way. So the reshoots were really efficient — it's what's called additional photography, you can't call it reshoots. But the tone of it, it's funny. It's always been funny. The script I wrote was funny. The characters are hilarious. I mean, you have a giant crocodile dude walking around, and a gum-smacking badass lady from Brooklyn with a baseball bat. It'd almost be hard to do that as a really dark, serious kind of movie in the first place. My hat's off to anybody that could do that because there's just so much life and fun in these characters.

FM. How much would you attribute the onscreen chemistry to what was on the page compared to the on-set kismet that you're hoping for when you assemble such talented artists?

DA. It's a function of just hard work. I mean, these guys rehearsed so hard. They really learned how to be these characters. Will took shooting lessons. Margot did acrobatics. ... did all this incredible training to be able to do so many of the stunts that she actually did herself. Don't know if Jay started any fires. Probably wouldn't want to know. Jai somehow managed to stay out of jail during all of this. But it really was this family that grew. Grew out of the rehearsals, grew out of that trust, and they're lifelong friends now. These guys are the best of friends, and it doesn't happen in this business. I mean, as we started finishing photography and wrapping out cast, they wouldn't leave until the last cast member was wrapped. And normally, they can't get on the plane fast enough.

FM. I have to imagine that when you're crafting your take on The Joker, you definitely have to acknowledge the very long shadow of the last Joker, Heath Ledger. What were the challenges of making a brand-new iteration that was a perfect fit for Jared?

DA. It took a lot of hard work. It's scary to take on that job. He's the most famous villain in Western fiction. He's been around a long time and in a lot of iterations, but I think the way we came at it was, you have to be respectful of the character and really understand the history and the different iterations of this character. There's been some really kind of silly, out-there campy versions. ... We wanted a Joker that felt of our world. And he's a gangster. He's always been a gangster. He started as a gangster. [So we wanted to] own that aspect, but take a look at what that means in this day and age. And then Jared as an actor just did an unbelievable amount of research in order to really be the sort of volatile, scary, deep Joker that he's become.

FM. And, of course, there's stories that he didn't break character on set. How does one direct The Joker in some of these pivotal scenes?

DA. Well, one calls him Mr. J and is very respectful. [chuckles] No, he was intimidating. I'll be honest. He tapped into something powerful and there's something so iconic about him — in fact, iconography, the power of that character, almost translates into what Jared was doing. But we worked hard, we rehearsed together, and so it did take a while to discover it, but once it happened it was a bit of a miracle.



FM. Everyone is very excited to see Harley Quinn finally on the big screen in live-action form. From all accounts, Margot really hits it out of the park with this. What was your favorite moment seeing that character come to life?
DA. Well, that's the thing, it really is her film debut, so we were always kind of breaking fresh ground with her. The thing that I hope people realize and can appreciate is how tough depicting Harley is as an acting job, because she's so volatile and in the moment and alive and insane and all these things. So as an actor in any given scene, Margot's switching gears between all these different attitudes. It's really an amazing performance to watch. . . I wanted to write an incredible female character with depth who can kick butt, because they're just so few and far between, but at the same time who has a viewpoint and has a rich personality.

FM. Batman makes an appearance in the film. How was working with Ben Affleck coming off of his BATMAN V SUPERMAN debut?
DA. He established how he was playing the character and his role and everything. It was almost like a visit from a senator. He's this tall, handsome guy and just so professional. Just a really great guy. And as an actor, he just came there to work. It was actually one of the better moments during the shoot when all of a sudden Batman shows up on set. Even the most grizzled electricians and grips, everyone just kind of pauses. It's all of a sudden you're a ten-year-old kid again.

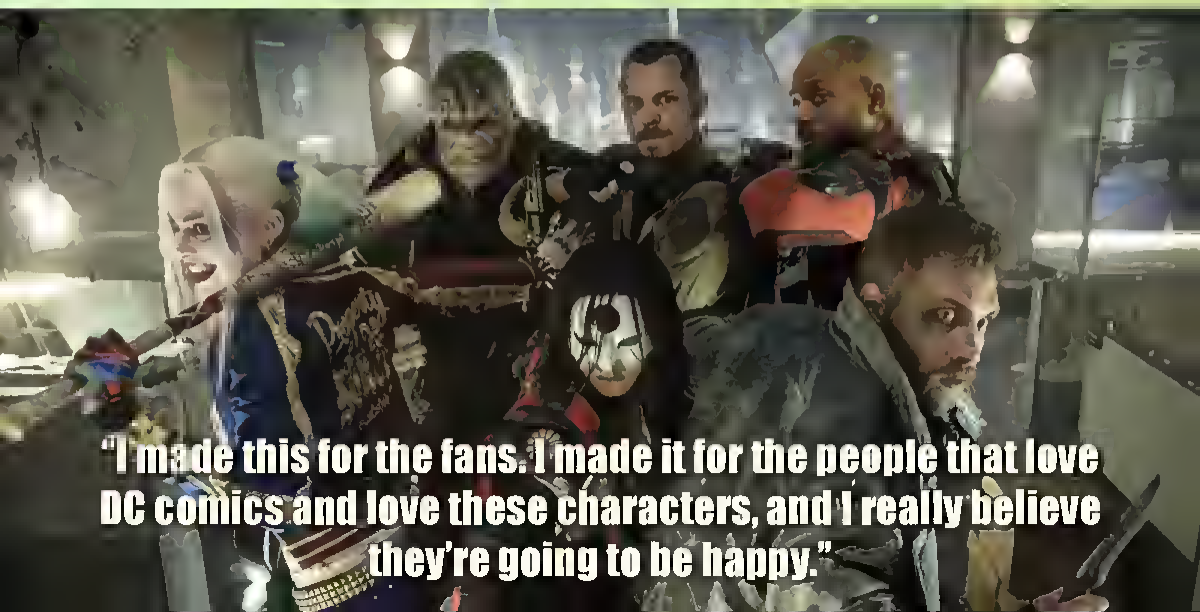
FM. Given the larger cinematic context of SUICIDE SQUAD with the DC extended universe, did you have autonomy, or was there a lot of strategic control from the upper levels at the studio?
DA. It was a lot of fun. They let me absolutely make my movie, but at the same time it's sandbox rules, so if I want to borrow the shovel and pail, I've got to treat it nicely and hand it back intact. You don't want to step in anyone else's lane, but at the same time, you'll see from the movie, it's a very unique film. It really is unlike anything that's been out there. And that's been the excitement of this. I have such love for the DC universe, and then to be able to touch these characters and bring them together, but also have my voice as a filmmaker and do what I do best, it was kind of the best of all worlds. I made this for the fans. I made it for the people that love DC comics and love these characters, and I really believe they're going to be happy.

FM. Is this film designed at a certain point to tie in to JUSTICE LEAGUE or the other DC stepping stones?
DA. Let's just say that anything could happen. Anyone could show up!

FM. Lastly, I know there's talk about a SUICIDE SQUAD sequel already. Is that something that you're thinking about assuming the film kills it at the box office?
DA. [laughs] Look, I'd be honored if they'd have me back. I love these characters.

SUICIDE SQUAD explodes into theaters everywhere August 5.

Follow David Ayer on Twitter @DavidAyerMovies



DC'S TRUE DEADSHOT PHOTOGRAPHER

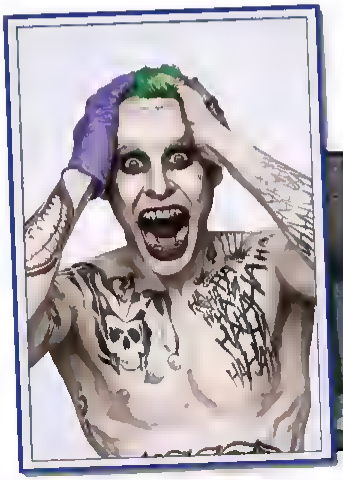


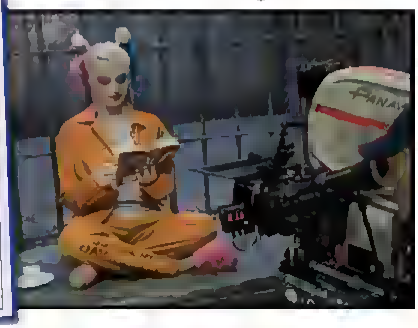
SUICIDE SQUAD still photographer Clay Enos is DC's and Zack Snyder's top choice to capture their cinematic worlds as well as their private, behind-the-scenes set moments. From WATCHMEN to WONDER WOMAN and JUSTICE LEAGUE, Clay tells FM what it's like to be the first one to share glimpses of these tentpole movies with the masses – a fraction "off axis."

By David Weiner

Remember how you felt the first time you saw that photo of a tatted-up, purple-gloved Jared Leto screaming as The Joker from SUICIDE SQUAD? Or the first image of Gal Gadot, sword drawn and ready for combat, as Wonder Woman? Or the first shot you finally caught of Ben Affleck in full costume as Batman? Those iconic images that prompted a reaction from you are all courtesy of the camera lens of Clay Enos.

"There's just this roar of opinion and celebration, and it would be foolish and hubris for me to try and distill that into anything coherent," comments Clay about his own emotional reaction to how the world responds to his widely distributed images of DC's cinematic finest. "It's just super fun. I'm super honored that my images tend to be the first things out there. That said, it's all really in support of a very different storytelling medium."





Reflecting on the steps that led him to his current profession, Clay shares, "My introduction to photography was crystallized at Ithaca College, where I just had amazing professors and I delved into a BFA in film, photography, and visual arts." But snapping photos for a living took a back seat to other aspirations as "the idealism of a new graduate met the hard reality of 1991 New York City." Clay eventually found success in the tech field during the dot-com boom, which afforded him the financial freedom to return to that first passion, photography, as an artist on his own terms. "And then the bust came and I had to sort of eat crow and get back to work, but I tasted what I loved doing."

Meanwhile, Clay's friend and Ithaca classmate, Deborah Johnson, met and married Zack Snyder, who was riding high at the box office with the successes of his DAWN OF THE DEAD remake and 300, the latter of which she executive produced. "That friendship offered me an opportunity to come on board with WATCHMEN as the Unit Photographer," says Clay. "I had seen and glimpsed the position when I visited the set of the first 300, and my curiosity was sufficiently piqued, and then the opportunity presented itself."

Working on WATCHMEN turned out to be a fruitful experience, leading to not only memorable shots and steady work with the Snyders, but an enviable tome with WATCHMEN: PORTRAITS. Clay laughs heartily when he thinks about how green he was when he started the job. "That first experience was a little bit of an eye opener. I made all the mistakes you

"I've been in the trenches. They know that, trust me, and we can make a different kind of photograph."







OPPOSITE TOP: Clay Enos with Deborah and Zack Snyder on the JUSTICE LEAGUE set. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Clay's first-released Joker pic and Margot Robbie on the SUICIDE SQUAD set. ABOVE: Clay's daily gear. LEFT: Behind-the-scenes shots of BATMAN V SUPERMAN. BELOW: Clay's WATCHMEN portraits and book.

could make. I overshot like a lunatic. I certainly documented that film being made. I didn't know when to stop!

No one prepared me for the all-consuming nature of filmmaking, so I finished that thing just exhausted. I thought, 'I'll never do that again. That was brutal.'

"Debbie would be the first to say that I shot all of WATCHMEN un-blimped," he continues. "Talk about rookie move — I didn't own the sound blimp that goes around the camera to make it quiet, so, needless to say, I made a ton of noise, and I can't believe how forgiving the actors were." But the benefit of Clay's on-set naivete was that he had no qualms about tapping an actor on the shoulder to capture them. He got better photo ops than the average still photographer. "On some level I lived every fan's dream of having full access to explore, photographically, the making of a movie," he says. "I was particularly drawn to portraiture at the time, and here was five decades' worth of remarkable background actors and costumed superheroes and you name it. The details — incredible hair, incredible makeup, incredible costumes — how could I not make those portraits? And when the director saw what I was doing, he fully endorsed it."

Now a seasoned professional (who prefers to use a silent Sony camera on the set so he doesn't have to use a blimp or worry about invasive clicks and clacks) currently at work on the Snyder directed/produced JUSTICE LEAGUE, Clay details the daily obstacles of being a still photographer. "The biggest challenge daily is you're the only person on set every day not actually making the physical film. We contribute to the marketing, to the film's ultimate reception, but we're not making the movie, and so we are essentially in the way to the project at hand. And so there's that little bit of understanding that you've got to be discreet in your movements and your behavior. ... And then the second probably most frustrating thing is that you're always off axis from the movie camera. The movie camera gets the perfect shot; everything is lined up, and the background is perfect, and all the actors are stacked perfectly in the frame and if you're just a hair's breadth off, that image disappears. So the challenge becomes to find the best photograph in any given situation and try to make an image that's representative, but not necessarily exactly, from the film."

Clay also does promotional "gallery" shoots for the worldwide advertising department, such as for the one-sheet posters, and snaps costume tests. Of the gallery shoots, which can be much more lively and music-filled because the sound-sensitive trappings of a movie set are not there, he explains, "I've always done them during principal photography, and that has huge advantage because the actors are still in the zone. The relationships that I've made with them over the course of the shoot are still there and it's obvious. And if you think of photography as a conversation, then that conversation is still fresh and familiar, and I think that will show itself in the photograph. I'm not just some sort of disinterested third party getting a fat paycheck to come make the movie poster. I've been in the trenches. They know that, trust me, and we can make a different kind of photograph."

Summing up what he does for a living, Clay confides, "Filmmaking is such the carny life. I've made lifelong friends of so many folks across the crew and the cast alike. ... To be there in the middle of it is daunting and humbling, and I'd be crazy not to be grateful."

Follow Clay on Twitter @ClayEnos



GODZILLA SURGES AGAIN



TOHO'S ALL-TIME FAN-FAVORITE IS BACK ON THE BIG SCREEN THIS SUMMER IN GODZILLA RESURGENCE, REINVENTED WITH A BIGGER, DARKER, MORE THREATENING INCARNATION.

By Steve Ryfle

Godzilla's reign as King of the Monsters spans more than 60 years and 30 films, with 28 man-in-suit epics produced in its homeland of Japan and two big-budget CGI blockbusters out of Hollywood (and more on the way). Though created in 1954 as a Japanese filmic protest against U.S. hydrogen bomb testing in the Pacific, the giant radioactive reptile grew over time into a truly international pop culture icon. Godzilla has battled and co-starred with everyone from King Kong and King Ghidorah to Raymond Burr and Matthew Broderick, and stomped his way through decades of cinema, television, home video, merchandising, advertising, comics, fan conventions, and social media in Japan, the U.S., and around the globe.

It might be surprising to learn, then, that it's been 12 years since the last Japanese-made Godzilla film, GODZILLA: FINAL WARS (2004). That one was, to be kind, a hot mess. A DESTROY ALL MONSTERS (1968)–style homage to the franchise's first 50 years, with Godzilla taking on a who's who of rubber-suited foes from the Toho Studios pantheon in a battle for Earth, FINAL WARS' everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach even included the return of Godzilla's tadpole Minilla and a guest defeat by "Zilla," the giant CGI iguana from Tristar Pictures' GODZILLA (1998). Budgeted at a whopping (by Japan's standards) $19 million, that film was both a box-office disappointment and, with its deliberately shabby special effects and incoherent X-MEN–influenced storyline, a dud with fans.

Now comes yet another reboot. GODZILLA RESURGENCE, Toho's 29th Godzilla feature and the studio's concerted effort to return the monster to its origins as a terrifying, Tokyo-destroying force. With a storyline independent of both Legendary Pictures' GODZILLA (2014) and FINAL WARS — as well as Toho's "Millennium" series that preceded it, and the often-silly sequels of the 1960s and '70s — Toho once again turns the page and resets Godzilla history. Recalling the nightmare of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster of 2011, and reflecting modern-day Japan's geopolitical anxieties over escalating military threats posed by China and North Korea, RESURGENCE has a seemingly unstoppable Godzilla laying waste to the metropolis. Badly burned and deeply scarred by radiation, this Godzilla is more gruesome and haunting than any previous iteration of the creature — a sort of Godzilla meets THE WALKING DEAD — and to compete with the soaring skyscrapers that have appeared on Tokyo's skyline in recent decades it is also officially the tallest Godzilla ever, standing 118.5 meters (389 feet), taller even than its American cousin from Legendary (350 feet). The filmmakers behind the project see this as a darker, more realistic Godzilla for the post-9/11 world. (The Kanji characters that spell the film's Japanese title, SHIN GODZILLA, can be interpreted alternately as "New Godzilla" or "Godzilla, the God.")

GODZILLA RESURGENCE is made by a dynamic duo of Japan's science-fiction filmdom, two men who respect the long history and traditional special-effects methods that enabled Godzilla to reign for 60 years, even as they introduce cutting-edge digital filmmaking to the franchise. Shinji Higuchi made his mark as



the special-effects wunderkind behind the revamped GAMERA trilogy directed by Shusuke Kaneko (1996-1999) and went on to become an action and Sci-Fi director in his own right, with credits that include LORELEI: THE WITCH OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN (2005), SINKING OF JAPAN (2006, a remake of a 1970s disaster epic), and the two-part ATTACK ON TITAN (2015), based on the popular manga set in a world where people live in walled-off cities to avoid giant humanoid predators (more with Higuchi in our ATTACK ON TITAN interview in FM #282). Higuchi co-directed RESURGENCE with another Sci-Fi master, Hideaki Anno, whose mega-popular, post-apocalyptic anime NEON GENESIS EVANGELION (1995-96) pitted giant machines against monsters; the television show inspired a series of feature films that debuted in 2007. Together, Anno (who penned the screenplay) and Higuchi have taken Godzilla back to the basic elemental horror that defined the monster from the outset, and made its story relevant to world events yet again.

In a break from the past, this new Godzilla is not brought to life through an actor inside a monster costume. Higuchi uses the word "hybrid" to describe the special effects employed in GODZILLA RESURGENCE, and though the monster itself is digitally rendered, other time-tested methods were used in combination as well. As a lifelong fan of the Godzilla films, Higuchi felt a responsibility to respect the monster's legacy. "I am among the top 50 lovers of Godzilla in the world," he told the Associated Press. "That's how much I love Godzilla." Commenting on Godzilla's roots as a metaphor of war, atomic weapons, and other existential threats, Higuchi added: "It's an imaginary thing taking a very primitive form. Just a giant lizard. But it's shouldering so much ... Perhaps we are all waiting for that horrible thing that's within us that we fear."



Steve Ryfle is co-author with Ed Godziszewski of ISHIRO HONDA: A LIFE IN FILM, FROM GODZILLA TO KUROSAWA, due in 2017 from Wesleyan University Press.

A U.S. release date for GODZILLA RESURGENCE was unavailable at press time.

UNSUNG GODZILLAS

Godzilla has had its share of monstrous ups and downs over the years. While many of the first 28 G-films from Toho have proven to be sturdy fan favorites, more than a couple are considered B-list material by some *kaiju* enthusiasts. But even among these are several diamonds in the rough.

GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN (1955)



Rushed into production after the first GODZILLA was an instant hit, this marks Godzilla's first battle against a monster foe, the spiky quadruped Anguirus. After killing its adversary and tearing Osaka to shreds in the process, Godzilla heads north to Hokkaido and is chased by heroic fighter pilots. They defeat the monster in spectacular fashion, burying it in an icy avalanche.

GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER (1966)



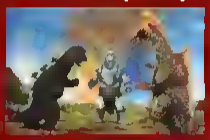
Godzilla is more of a co-star than the main event in this action-packed drama that takes a few cues from the James Bond franchise, though there's no Bond-style hero. A group of castaways wash up on a remote island populated by a terrorist organization manufacturing nuclear bombs. The heroes discover Godzilla sleeping in a cave and awaken it, the monster does battle with the giant shrimp Ebirah and Mothra, and destroys the villains' weapons factory in between.

ALL MONSTERS ATTACK (1969)



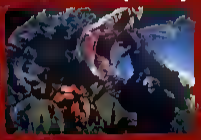
Long derided for its heavy use of stock footage from previous films, this is actually a clever and heartwarming meta-monster-movie. A lonely latchkey kid escapes his dreary life by dreaming of adventures on Monster Island, where he's befriended by Godzilla's son Minilla. When the boy is kidnapped by a pair of bumbling-yet-dangerous bank robbers, the lessons he's learned from his kaiju compadres help him dispense with the crooks, and he becomes a local hero.

TERROR OF MECHA-GODZILLA (1975)



Though the production is visibly low budget, this is a uniquely compelling entry in the Godzilla series. Part giant-monster melee and part romantic tragedy, it tells the story of a beautiful young woman driven to evil deeds by her mad-scientist father and alien invaders from the Black Hole, who turn her into a walking remote-control device for the giant robot Mechagodzilla. A three-way battle between Godzilla, its metallic doppelgänger, and newcomer Titanosaurus ensues.

GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE (1989)



Godzilla made a significant step forward here with a much-improved creature design, more convincing special effects, and a straight-ahead story about the perils of genetic engineering and matters of love, life, death, and international espionage. A new and more powerful Godzilla faces off with Biollante, a shape-shifting giant plant monster created by scientific overreach.

WHEN WE WERE KINGS

KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, the ultimate titan match-up of the early '60s, set the stage for the classic kaiju clashes we've all come to know and love.

By Steve Ryfle



Last year, Legendary Pictures announced that its two biggest stars (literally) would face off in the forthcoming GODZILLA VS KONG, slated for release in 2020. It's little wonder Hollywood would pit King Kong against the King of the Monsters in big-budget fashion, for the very flashpoint of Godzilla's worldwide popularity was KING KONG VS. GODZILLA (1962), directed by Ishiro Honda. Fifty-four years after its debut, this is still the most commercially successful Toho-produced Godzilla film ever and the most highly attended live-action Japanese Sci-Fi film of all time, having sold 11.2 million tickets in its initial release, plus an additional 1.3 million when reissued in the 1960s and '70s. (FINAL WARS, by comparison, sold about one million tickets in its theatrical run 42 years later.) This was only the third Godzilla film, and the first in seven years, prior to this, Godzilla was not viewed as a monster franchise. Only after Godzilla shared the screen with "the Eighth Wonder of the World" — Kong, it should be noted, received top billing — did Toho settle on the monster-versus-monster formula and begin cranking out its long and legendary series of Godzilla sequels. It's no exaggeration to say there would be no GODZILLA RESURGENCE, and no big-budget Godzillas from Hollywood, if not for the success of KING KONG VS. GODZILLA.







The project originated in Hollywood as a proposal by stop-motion animator Willis O'Brien for a sequel to KING KONG (1933). O'Brien's original title was KING KONG VS. FRANKENSTEIN, he envisioned



a battle in the streets of San Francisco between Kong and a monster created by Victor Frankenstein's grandson, and intended to animate the creatures via his signature effects work. O'Brien partnered with independent producer John Beck, who failed to attract a Hollywood studio but eventually hit pay dirt in Japan. Toho purchased the right to put King Kong in a film but turned the project into an entirely different movie. Sadly, O'Brien had no involvement in the production.

More than a mere monster mash, KING KONG VS GODZILLA is a satire of the ratings wars accompanying the explosion of Japanese television in the early '60s. Pharmaceutical company exec Tako (comic genius Ichiro Arishima) is frustrated that the TV show his company sponsors, a program about unexplained mysteries, is drawing lackluster viewership, so he sends the skeptical cameraman Sakurai (Tadao Takashima) and his goofy soundman sidekick Furue (Yu Fujiki), to get the story of a *mashin* (demon god) worshipped by natives on Faro Island in the South Pacific. There the men find King Kong, but rather than just capture it on film they strap the ape to a giant raft and haul it back to Japan. Kong escapes en route and runs amok. Godzilla, meanwhile, reappears and the two creatures are instinctively lead to a head-to-head showdown, with Tako and his crew following the action with their TV cameras.

Shot in widescreen and color, and peppered with comic high jinks from both the human cast and the monsters, the third Godzilla film made a radical departure from the somber monochrome of both GODZILLA (1954) and GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN (1955). Professional wrestlers such as Rikidozan and America's Freddie Blassie (who competed in Japan earlier in 1962) were extremely popular on TV, so the monsters mimic wrestling moves — grappling and tussling and flipping each other at Mount Fuji; they fling and kick boulders, and Kong grabs Godzilla by the tail and briefly swings his opponent around like a reptilian rag doll. Godzilla is still playing the heavy here, though with its constant clowning the beast evinces a certain comic charm, this is the first glimpse of the familiar personality that would help turn Godzilla from villain to hero a few films later. Kong, meanwhile, is hardly king-like, played by a man in a furry ape costume that pales in comparison to O'Brien's animated models of nearly 30 years before. Nevertheless, the monsters are about evenly matched, with Godzilla's radioactive breath scorching Kong's hairy hide and the big ape deriving super-strength from lightning strikes. The titanic struggle ends somewhat ambiguously when the two creatures tumble into the sea and only Kong surfaces, swimming off into the horizon toward his island home. (Though it's never stated outright in the film, Toho Studios' marketing materials would declare Kong the victor.) A longstanding rumor, attributed to a 1963 article penned by FM founding editor Forrest J Ackerman, held that two different endings were filmed and, depending on whether you saw KING KONG VS. GODZILLA in Japan or the West, Godzilla or Kong won the battle. This falsehood was repeated ad infinitum by film critics and other authorities for years but, alas, there's nothing to it.

Unfortunately, KING KONG VS GODZILLA is only commercially available in the U.S. in the version that was released to American cinemas in 1963, a heavily and poorly re-edited cut that features newly filmed segments of no-name newscasters covering the action from afar. These dreadfully boring inserts bring the film to a screeching halt time and again, sucking the fun out of the lively mash-up of corporate comedy and monster melee that characterizes the original Japanese edition. Due to copyright issues, this much-lesser American version will likely remain the only legitimate way to see Kong and Godzilla go toe-to-claw onscreen this side of the Pacific until Legendary's much anticipated remake arrives.



ABOVE & INSET: Ishiro Honda works with his costumed actors on set.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF SKULL ISLAND REIGN OF KONG



Grab your adventurer's hat and prepare to face Kong as we walk you through the moment-by-moment thrills of Universal Orlando's newest summer attraction.

By Jesse Holland

If you've ever wanted to experience what it's like to come face-to-face with the legendary King Kong, but didn't feel like dangling from the Empire State Building amid incoming fire from overzealous biplanes, then you're in luck. The Eighth Wonder of the World is making his triumphant return just over a decade after director Peter Jackson resurrected the world's most famous primate for the big screen — and the good news is you won't have to sail to the coast of Sumatra to find him.

Timed to inject excitement into the dog days of summer, Universal Orlando's SKULL ISLAND: REIGN OF KONG theme-park attraction, located in Islands of Adventure, immerses ride-goers into an environment of dense jungles, ancient temple ruins, hostile natives — and one ferocious marquee star. But don't expect a slow, plodding robot with matted hair and herky-jerky mannerisms. This is King Kong, one of the most famous movie monsters of all time, and the sort of icon worthy of a "massive attraction unlike anything you've seen before," according to Universal creative director Mike West.

To that end, the nearly six-minute ride will break new ground by implementing the park's first-ever trackless attraction vehicle. Forget about those cramped buggies you may have bounced around in as a kid. This 17-ton free-range expedition vehicle, a staggering 40 feet in length, holds a whopping 72 guests (as long as they meet the attraction's 34-inch height requirement). Not only does it create a more communal experience (the more screams, the better), it's likely to dramatically reduce wait times. But don't break out the bubbly just yet, as this trek delivers you deep into a den of creatures that West describes as "intelligent, vicious, and always hungry."

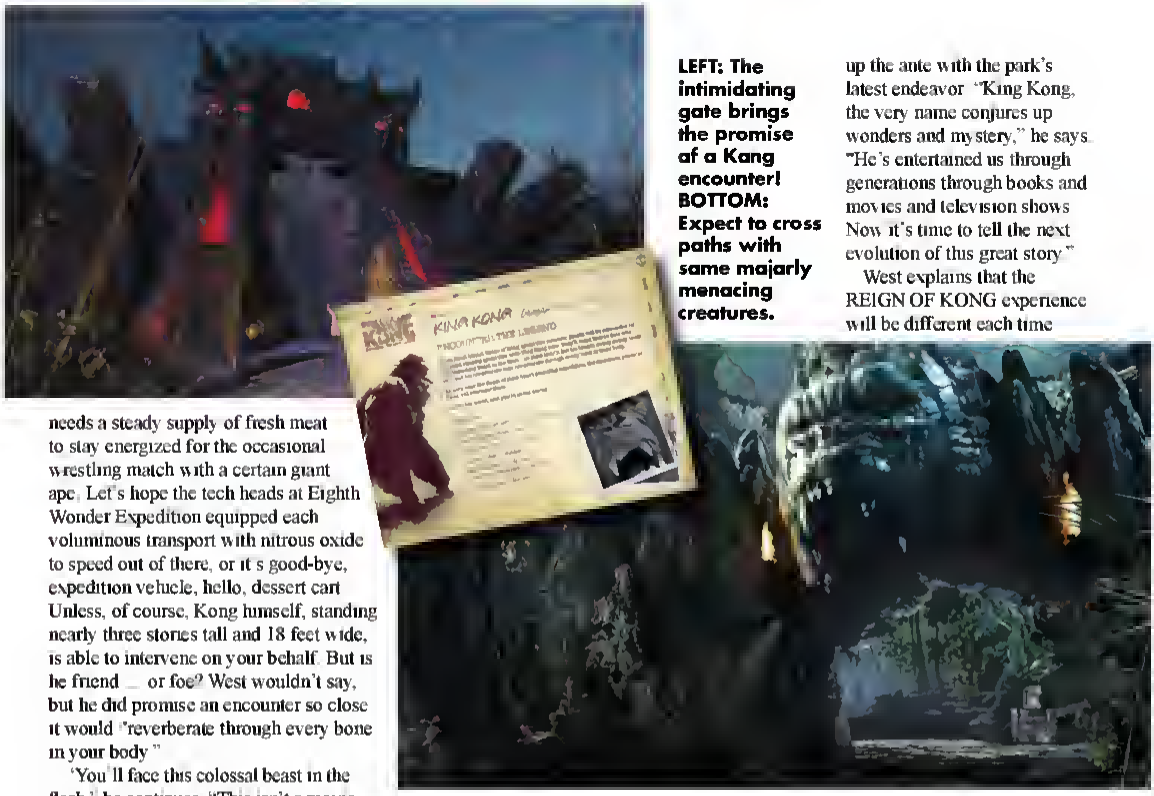
That includes the Terapusmordax, a huge, bat-like creature responsible for turning hapless gamers into a digital buffet in PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG videogame, based on the 2005 movie that set a new (and perhaps unmatched) high-water mark for monster movies. How will park guests survive a flying meat eater with a 10-foot wingspan and a craving for sun-baked tourists? That remains to be seen.

If by chance your camp evades the winged menace, you'll still be tasked with overcoming the Carnictis Sordicus, affectionately known among Kongophiles as the "vile meat weasel." Probably because it's built like the Alaskan Bull Worm and fitted with a gaping maw not unlike RETURN OF THE JEDI's famed Sarlacc Pit. It's the kind of creature that nightmares are made of.

Whatever is left of the 72 explorers brave enough to pass through the island's Great Wall are not out of the woods just yet. Vastatosaurus Rex, the last descendant of the better-known Tyrannosaurus Rex, still awaits. I'm sure it will come as no surprise to learn that an apex predator measuring 70 feet long from snout to tail

BELOW: The 40-foot expeditian vehicle to Skull Island can carry up to 72 adventurers.





LEFT: The intimidating gate brings the promise of a Kang encounter! BOTTOM: Expect to cross paths with same majorly menacing creatures.

needs a steady supply of fresh meat to stay energized for the occasional wrestling match with a certain giant ape. Let's hope the tech heads at Eighth Wonder Expedition equipped each voluminous transport with nitrous oxide to speed out of there, or it's good-bye, expedition vehicle, hello, dessert cart. Unless, of course, Kong himself, standing nearly three stories tall and 18 feet wide, is able to intervene on your behalf. But is he friend — or foe? West wouldn't say, but he did promise an encounter so close it would "reverberate through every bone in your body."

"You'll face this colossal beast in the flesh," he continues. "This isn't a movie, this is the real deal." That's the prevailing theme on SKULL ISLAND as multilateral environments help shape an immersive interactive experience that adds a new element to the long-running franchise which brought the Megaprimatus kong to life over 83 years ago.

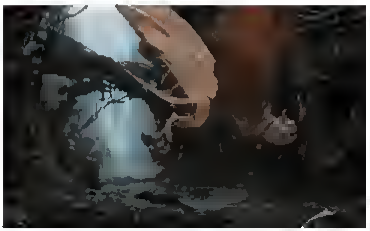
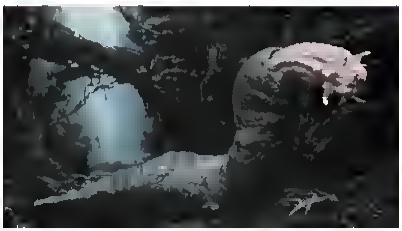
Designed to keep Kong foremost on fans' radar, REIGN OF KONG opens far ahead of the upcoming KONG: SKULL ISLAND movie. But unlike the celluloid entry, directed by Jordan Vogt-Roberts and set for release in March 2017, Universal's live experience is set in the early 1930s, drawing inspiration from existing canon. In addition, consultant Jackson was an integral part of the early concept and design so that guests would recognize familiar elements in SKULL ISLAND while simultaneously experiencing new surprises along the way, exclusive to Universal Orlando.

Seasoned theme-park fans have crossed paths with Kong under the Universal banner three times before. KONGFRONTATION (1990-2002) welcomed guests to Universal Studios Orlando before eventually being replaced by REVENGE OF THE MUMMY, while KING KONG ENCOUNTER (1986-2008) and KING KONG 360 3D (2010-present) made waves over at Universal Studios Hollywood. That lineup is tough to beat, which is why West promised to up the ante with the park's latest endeavor. "King Kong, the very name conjures up wonders and mystery," he says. "He's entertained us through generations through books and movies and television shows. Now it's time to tell the next evolution of this great story."

West explains that the REIGN OF KONG experience will be different each time out. To achieve that goal, a total of five different drivers (serving as expedition guides) have been charged with leading guests throughout the world of Kong. That includes a loose-cannon cowgirl, a hardened ex-cop, a mystical descendant of island natives, a PhD student in paleontology, and the younger cousin of famed movie director Carl Denham from the Kong storyline, each with their own story to tell. What story will guests tell after experiencing the live adventure?

"This is his world," West warns. "And you're at his mercy."

For more on SKULL ISLAND: REIGN OF KONG, head over to universalorlando.com


HOW TO REIMAGINE YOUR DRAGON

Disney revisits another beloved classic from their vast catalog. But will modern audiences make themselves visible for a new version of PETE'S DRAGON? Director David Lowery and star Oakes Fegley make their case for FM.

By Drew Turney

Disney has stumbled upon a lucrative new jam, minting the back catalog of its own animated fantasies and turning them into live-action productions, and now audiences who grew up loving classic titles like CINDERELLA, THE JUNGLE BOOK, and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST are living through a bit of a renaissance.

Their latest live-action remake is PETE'S DRAGON. When director Don Chaffey's (JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.) original hit cinemas in November 1977, the whimsical film's blend of live action with a friendly cartoon dragon who could become invisible wowed audiences around the world. Of course, every second film nowadays is a blend of live action and CGI animation, so director David Lowery promises a movie that's just as heartfelt this time around, yet a completely different story.

"What would I enjoy as a seven-year-old watching movies?" he says to explain the genesis of his version. "I love playing in the woods. I love the whole CALVIN AND HOBBES–style childhood. I just wanted to make a version of my ideal childhood with a dragon in it."

After deciding he wanted his version to take part in a forest setting, Lowery says the storyline and characters emerged naturally. "What issues come up if we set something up in the forest?" he asks. "Cutting down trees — a lumber mill. Someone who's trying to keep that from happening — a forest ranger. We got [Bryce Dallas Howard's] character from that."

Twelve-year-old actor Oakes Fegley, who plays Pete, points out that this isn't your dad's PETE'S DRAGON. There's a boy called Pete, a dragon called Elliot, and that's it. "I hadn't actually watched the original, and I didn't want to because I didn't want to get any ideas in my head about what the movie was going to be like, because it's completely different," Fegley says. "After the shoot was over I watched it twice and [ours] is completely different from the old one."

CREATING A CUDDLY DRAGON

Of course, no matter how much the character relationships or emotional stakes keep the audience invested in the story, one of the biggest draw cards for many films featured in the pages of *Famous Monsters*





"I JUST WANTED TO MAKE A VERSION OF MY IDEAL CHILDHOOD WITH A DRAGON IN IT."

– DAVID LOWERY

is seeing what the dragon/shark/werewolf/alien/etc will look like. With his huge green, shaggy pelt and enormous eyes, Elliot is more like a giant, curious terrier than the scaly, fire-breathing monster we know from pop culture.

Lowery says he had Elliot's look in his head from the get-go, even though he and his team of designers went through a lot of sketches to get there. "Ultimately it ended up back where that original design was," he reveals. "They made my amateur sketch look like a real thing and it was great. The very first thing I said to the studio was that I wanted the dragon to be furry. That was really important to me. I like cuddly things."

Once Elliott's look was locked there was only one place to go — Weta Digital, close by the New Zealand set that stands in for the Pacific Northwest. "Not only are they great at doing character work with their CGI creatures, but they mastered fur with the PLANET OF THE APES films," says Lowery, who recalls it was quite the process. Every strand of fur had to interact with real or virtual environments (such as the lighting or how it moves in the wind), but he remarks that the team at Weta has its "hair process" down. "They animate the shot, hit 'render,' and then two weeks later there'd be a shot of pretty good-looking fur coming out the other end."

AN INVISIBLE FRIEND

Of course, a common refrain from actors in the modern age is how tricky it can be on set, reacting to a guy running around with a tennis ball on a pole as a character that doesn't exist yet. It was no different for Fegley, who worked with markers to represent Elliot's eyeline and had no idea how his giant best pal would look. "At the beginning of the shoot it was hard for me to picture what the dragon was like, and in my mind I had to come up with what he was like," he explains. "They had rough drawings that helped me out, and eventually it became easier for me to picture Elliot because we interacted more and I figured it out more. They did a lot of sketches and drawings that helped the actors."

All of which leads to the billion-dollar question. In 1977 (back when it was the million-dollar question), we'd seen few dragons on screen. Today we've had Smaug in THE HOBBIT, Toothless in HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON, the young charges of Daenerys Targaryen in GAME OF THRONES, and everything in between (see our "Ten Famous Dragons of Filmdom" list in FM #285). Is a dragon in the movie title enough to bring audiences into theaters anymore?

Lowery says that question is one of the reasons he wanted to make Elliot distinct from all the others. "We found out really quickly where the design would break and not be a dragon anymore. If we put feathers on the wings he wasn't a dragon, but if you made bat wings he still felt like a dragon. I hope the character in itself stands out."

If people grew up loving the original, Lowery figures they'll line up again no matter what Elliot looks like. The critical difference he thinks, harks back to a particular hallmark of other movies from the original film's era. "I look back at the movies I grew up with — they weren't specifically geared towards kids, they were just geared towards all audiences," he says. "Anything from back then, like STAR WARS or RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK or E.T. — even going back to some of the weirder Disney movies like THE BLACK HOLE — they really worked for me as a kid because they played to kids but they appealed to adults. [It was] just storytelling with integrity."

PETE'S DRAGON flies into theaters everywhere August 12.

Follow David Lowery and Oakes Fegley's Twitterings @davidlowery and @oakes_fegley





OPPOSITE: Robert Redford, Bryce Dallas Howard, and Oona Lourence spy o dragon. Oakes Fegley ploy's Pete. ABOVE: Director Dovid Lowery on set with Redford. INSET: The original PETE'S DRAGON from 1977.

NO STRINGS ATTACHED



The makers of CORALINE, PARANORMAN, and THE BOXTROLLS are back with an all-new stop-motion animated fantasy-adventure, KUBO AND THE TWO STRINGS, and director Travis Knight discusses the beauty of stop-motion animation, working with A-list talent, and what films inspire him with FM

By Harker Jones

Based in Hillsboro, Oregon, the 11-year-old LAIKA Studios is quite a distance from Hollywood, which may be why its films stand out. Currently, the studio is three for three with its first trio of feature films released. An adaptation of Neil Gaiman's novel CORALINE, the supernatural adventure PARANORMAN, and the trash-collecting troll tale THE BOXTROLLS. All grossed north of $100 million, garnered critical acclaim, and received Academy Award nominations for Best Animated Feature. They're hoping to strike gold again with their latest offering, KUBO AND THE TWO STRINGS, a samurai epic set in ancient Japan, concerning a young boy, Kubo, who must battle gods and monsters in his search for a magical suit of armor. With KUBO, longtime LAIKA lead animator Travis Knight is taking the helm for the first time.

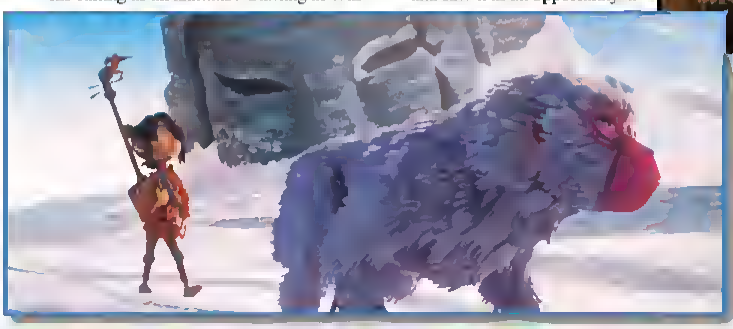
Long before he became LAIKA president and CEO, Knight released a rap album under the moniker Chilly Tee back in 1993, but soon realized that as much as he liked music, the spotlight wasn't for him. So he retreated behind the curtain where he found his calling as an animator. Starting at Will Vinton Studios (which later became LAIKA) as an intern, he worked his way up to lead animator on the studio's three previous films and was nominated for an Oscar for his work on THE BOXTROLLS.

What prompted Knight to step into the director's chair was the epic span of the KUBO story. While the studio's previous films had dealt with larger-than-life worlds and tales, KUBO has an even larger scope. "The simplest version of KUBO, when we started to talk about the story, was it's an epic samurai film told in stop motion," says Knight, "and right off the bat, that germ of an idea I found really compelling, because as a kid I loved stop-motion animation, but I also loved big, epic stories. Big fantasy epics. I was a huge fan of Tolkien. Of STAR WARS. LONE WOLF AND CUB. I loved Greek and Norse mythology. I loved big epic filmmakers like Kurosawa and Ridley Scott and Steven Spielberg and Miyazaki. So this film felt like it had all those ingredients . . . I saw so much of myself in this story, and saw it as an opportunity, a vehicle to make a personal statement and really bring myself, my own life experiences to life through this character."

STIRRED BY STOP MOTION

Like many kids growing up in the 1970s, Knight watched Ray Harryhausen stop-motion classics like THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD and JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS as well as the Rankin-Bass holiday specials that were prevalent at the time, all of which inspired him to become a stop-motion artist. He recalls of the animation style, "There was something about it that I just thought was so beautiful and charming and weird. . . . However many decades later, I still have that same feeling. I still feel like it's this incredible, magical form of moviemaking."





The first film experience that really stirred Knight was seeing E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL in the theater when he was only eight. He was moved to

"It's an epic samurai film told in stop motion."

tears knowing that it was fantasy but also understanding that it spoke of universal truths that were "probably more true than many things I'd ever heard in my life … It was this portrait of loneliness, and it really got to this profound and melancholic truth about love and the idea that to love is to hurt, but also to love is to heal, and it's something that gives our life meaning. It makes you vulnerable but also gives you strength. … That was really the start of my love affair with film and those are the kind of experiences that we want to make."



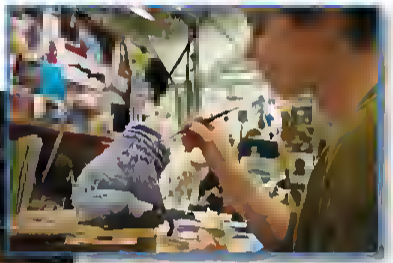
CRAFTING CHARACTERS

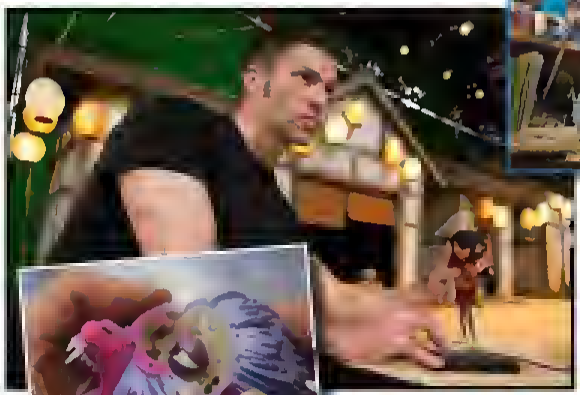
The KUBO script was so strong and the characters so well written that it attracted Hollywood royalty, including Oscar winners Charlize Theron and Matthew McConaughey and nominees Ralph Fiennes and Rooney Mara, who were eager to do voice work. McConaughey even took to reading the script in chapters to his children to gauge their interest in its potential. Knight says, "Actors of that caliber, they can do anything they want. There's no shortage of films that would want them to be involved, and so when actors of that level are attracted to a project like ours, it's really, really humbling. I'm moved by it."

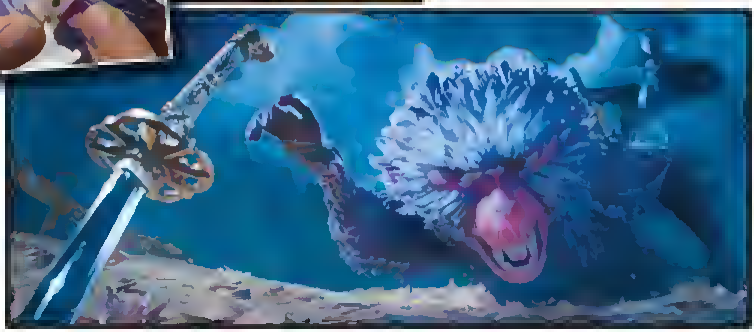
Stop-motion animation can be painstaking in its detail. In fact, LAIKA has been working on KUBO for five years. But Knight and company like to really take their time building the characters from the inside out. The actual animation is essentially the last step after crafting the story, the characters, the arc — and then literally fabricating the sets, costumes, and character body parts from scratch. Helping the actors find the interior life of their characters also happens before the animators even get started. Knight says it's essentially two sides of the same coin, acting and animating. "With the voice acting, the actor is conveying all the different subtleties of human emotion with their voice. With animation, the animator is doing the same thing, but physically with something you see — in our case, with a puppet."

While he's unable to discuss any upcoming projects on LAIKA's plate, Knight reveals that they're working on a schedule to release a film a year. And he's quite bullish on LAIKA's prospects. "As I look ahead at the next handful of films that I know that we have coming down the pike, they are so completely unlike anything that we've done, and I find that really exciting. Because … one of the things that gets us really, really exhilarated is the idea of creating new and original stories and creating new worlds."

KUBO AND THE TWO STRINGS strums into theaters August 19.







TOP: Art Parkinson is the voice of Kubo. OPPOSITE: Matthew McConoughey ploys Beetle. LEFT: Director Travis Knight positions Kubo on set. BELOW: Chorlize Theron voices Monkey — with a close-up of the character's face detail above.

Tale as Old as Time

Girl meets monster, girl falls in love with monster, girl's love transforms monster in the newest big-screen BEAUTY AND THE BEAST spectacle imported from France.

By Gabriela Tscharner Patao



After CINDERELLA, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST is arguably the most popular fairy tale about female fantasies of love and relationships, with the Beast as a metaphor for the bad-boy boyfriend that only she can reform. It doesn't work in real life, but plays beautifully on the big screen.

The latest incarnation of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE is a fantasy spectacle from SILENT HILL and BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF director Christophe Gans. The tale of a girl who trades places with her father, captured by a vicious beast in a rose-covered castle, is a French classic. The artsy 1940s film version by Jean Cocteau is beloved to a point where it angered people when news of a remake surfaced. However, Gans was not to be deterred. "When I pitched BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, [producer] Jérôme Seydoux blurted out, 'Do you realize what you're getting yourself into? They'll never let you forget Cocteau.' " quips the director. "Of course there'll always be people to say that Cocteau was better! But BEAUTY AND THE BEAST is rife with innuendo, blank spaces, areas that Cocteau deliberately left out. He left many doors open, and I went through them."

Going back to the original fairy tale by 18th-century author Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve, Gans took note every time Cocteau left a certain theme or aspect of the story untapped. The origin of the prince's transformation interested the filmmaker especially. Whereas it is reduced to one line in Cocteau's movie, Gans delves into the rot of the Beast's curse wholeheartedly.

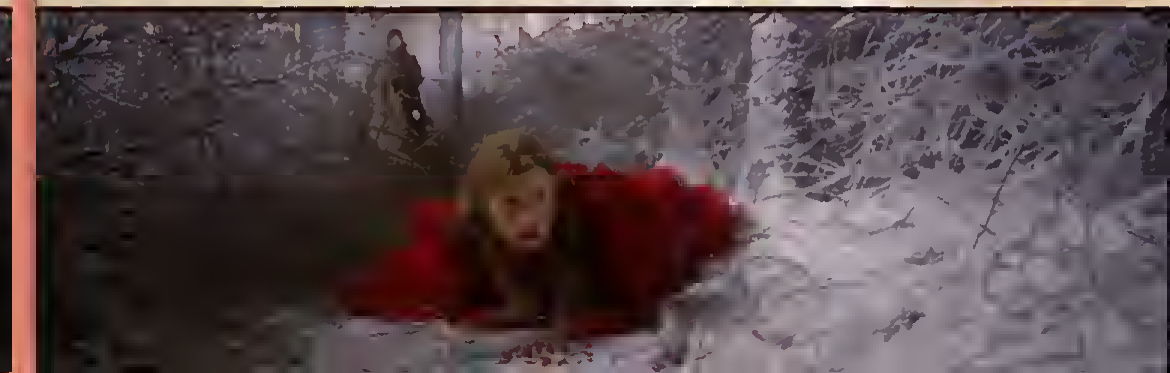
The role of the Beast is played by French star Vincent Cassel (OCEAN'S TWELVE, BLACK SWAN). "Before he became the Beast, the prince was kind of a creep," describes Cassel of his character. "Full of himself, power-hungry, and vindictive." The prince is a hunter, obsessed with the idea of killing a golden deer, the most beautiful creature on his lands. His wife makes him promise to stop hunting, but he doesn't, an act that costs him everything in the end. Ultimately, the prince's dark nature manifests itself on the outside and turns him into an embittered, lonely beast, doomed to an eternity of regret. Unless he can change his ways and earn somebody's love. Cassel laughs. "That's what I had to play. [A jerk] who turns into a nice guy."

Christophe Gans' love for movie monsters started in the '60s and on the pages of a magazine not unlike *Famous Monsters* called MIDI-MINUIT FANTASTIQUE, which was steeped in the great myths of the fantasy genre. When he was eight years old, he already knew that director Terence Fisher and the makeup artist Roy Ashton had designed the lycanthrope for THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, which was based on Jean Cocteau's Beast. His vision of the movies was shaped by the connections between classical cinema and fantasy films of the '60s and '70s, and notably the Hammer horror collection. "It was a school of filmmaking that stands apart mainly because of the beauty of their monsters," he explains. "Horror wasn't just there to be scary. There could be something seductive about it."



Among Gans' favorites are Christopher Lee's interpretations of Dracula and the elegant adaptions of monster classics like THE WEREWOLF, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, and THE MUMMY. "Filmmaker Terence Fisher brought out the romantic quality of these creatures," he says. "The monsters elicit a combination of fascination and repulsion, and therefore a powerful eroticism. I tried to make the Beast seductive in his own way, since Belle is going to fall in love with his personality, his nobility, but also his physique."

Cassel's past studies to become a mime helped the actor to achieve the physical gracefulness the role calls for.





green bonnet.'" Seydoux had to imagine the face of the Beast, which wasn't hard, since the mask had already been created. "I could see Vincent sweat a lot. He told me he lost [22 pounds] during the shoot."

Later on, Cassel had to undergo a process described by Gans as "facial looping." He duplicated his earlier facial performance in front of several cameras, without moving. The same technique was used for the reverse-aging Brad Pitt in THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON. This performance was then applied to a mask designed by Patrick Tatopoulos and built by Steve Wang. "I would like to point out that the mask is not a digital creation. It was built physically by people who spent hundreds of hours inserting every hair one at a time," raves Gans. It was then scanned and applied to the images of Cassel. That way the actor didn't have to spend many hours in makeup every morning.' This digital solution was a huge time-saver." Eventually, Cassel learned to go with the flow. "What do you say to that? You adapt!"

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST hits theaters in limited release September 23 from Shout! Factory Films

OPPOSITE: Léa Seydoux is the new Belle, with Vincent Cassel as The Beast. ABOVE: Can love tame The Beast? BELOW: Seydoux shares a laugh with director Christophe Gans.

However, there is much more to creating a modern movie monster than acting chops. "I was told it would be shot like AVATAR," remembers Cassel. 'With a little camera in front of my face. I act and they capture.' Technological advances, however, have since moved beyond AVATAR's methods and Cassel's work suddenly got a lot harder. He wasn't too happy with the changes. "The reality is I had zero control over my character! Yes, we had discussions about how he would look and what traits he'd get from me. But when I showed up on set I realized it wouldn't be like I was told."

His performance was recorded twice. First on set, where he physically wore the costume and played opposite the actress who plays Belle. SPECTRE Bond girl Lea Seydoux.' I had a hard time keeping a straight face when I saw him," laughs the actress. "He wore this magnificent costume, but his head was covered with little crosses and he was wearing a



Famous BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Incarnations:

LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE (1946)



This black-and-white, hyper-romantic fantasy adaptation is based on an abridged and rewritten version of the original fairy tale by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont. To this day Jean Cocteau's film is considered *the* standard for BEAUTY AND THE BEAST films. It stars Jean Marais as a sensitive, vulnerable, and ultimately tragic Beast, who can't be saved by Josette Day as Belle. Roger Ebert added the film to his THE GREAT MOVIES list in 1999, calling it "one of the most magical of all films," and EMPIRE magazine ranks it #26 on its 100 Best Films of World Cinema.

DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Animated (1991), Broadway (1994), and Live Action (2017)



After the success of THE LITTLE MERMAID in 1989, the time was right for Disney's animated musical version of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. It became a box-office success, grossing $425 million worldwide, and won the Oscar for Best Original Score and Best Original Song. The movie was adapted into a stage show in '91 for Disney World and Disneyland Paris, then went to Broadway from 1994 to 2007. Continuing the winning streak of live-action Disney adaptations like CINDERELLA and THE JUNGLE BOOK, Emma Watson and Dan Stevens will bring the next tale of Belle and her Beast to life on the big screen in spring 2017.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: THE TV SHOW (1987—1990)



Linda Hamilton and Ron Perlman take on the title roles in this enormously popular small-screen incarnation that aired on CBS. This time they are named Catherine and Vincent, and in an interesting twist from the original, the Beast's appearance doesn't transform into a human's after receiving Catherine's love. Vincent's inner beauty shines a light on the ugliness of the world they live in. Interesting fact: George R.R. Martin, the creator of GAME OF THRONES, was a producer and writer on this show. In 2012 CBS launched a short-lived reboot, loosely inspired by the '87 drama, with Kristin Kreuk and Jay Ryan in the leads.

BEASTLY (2011)



This big-screen version of the familiar tale, based on Alex Flinn's 2007 novel, is a modern retelling with Alex Pettyfer and Vanessa Hudgens as Kyle and Lindy. Its focus is on the horror that is high school and the fear of not fitting in. The good-looking but mean and shallow Kyle is taught a lesson by Kendra, a girl he humiliated, and is transformed into a bald, scarred, and tattooed hot mess. Kyle's ughification, however, is unsuccessful for us, the moviegoers, since the monster version looks much cooler than Kyle the jock ever did.



ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

An Interview with JOHN CARPENTER

by DAVID WEINER

RETROSPECT Fondly re-examining enduring classics and guilty pleasures of the past.



"Kurt's character, Snake Plissken, has lived in memory, and in the culture, and is extremely strong."

New York, 1997. Manhattan Island is a maximum-security federal penitentiary, and the president's plane has crashed in the middle of it. Snake Plissken (played by Kurt Russell), a battle-hardened hero-turned-convict, is tasked by the government with extracting the president within 24 hours in exchange for a full pardon. Adding to the ticking clock is a mini-explosive in his bloodstream timed to detonate in 24 hours. Oh, yeah, and the human race depends on Snake's success, because the U.S. is at war and the president was on his way to a summit meeting to avert a nuclear crisis with China and the Soviet Union. If Snake fails, we all fail.

That's the hook that made all of us want to go for a thrill ride with Kurt in John Carpenter's newest adventure in 1981, ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, a radically different film from his previous big screen entries, 1978's game-changing indie film HALLOWEEN and his 1980 horror follow-up, THE FOG.

Now, 35 years after its summer 1981 release, John Carpenter revisits ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK exclusively for *Famous Monsters* to provide new tales, new insights, and new perspective.



ABOVE: Kurt Russell smolders as Snake Plissken. BELOW: Ernest Bargnine, Harry Dean Stantan, and Adrienne Barbeau aid Snake in his mission to save the prez.

Famous Monsters: I'd love to have your CliffsNotes version of the making of ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK from your perspective 35 years later. What sparked the idea for the film?

John Carpenter: Well, there were a bunch of different things that propelled me to work on this movie and make this movie. One was a movie called DEATH WISH, which was out in the '70s. New York was having some big, giant problems at the time — I'm thinking bankruptcy and a crime problem. And this Charles Bronson movie, DEATH WISH, came along and he was a vigilante architect, of all things. And something about the movie struck a chord with me. It wasn't a great film, but it was a fun movie. And I read a lot of science fiction. I read a Harry Harrison story — there was this planet, the toughest, most evil place in the universe. So who're you going to choose to go in there and do something with some mission? The most evil guy in the universe. That idea stuck with me and I thought of writing this kind of dystopian future story about New York as a prison and a guy has to go in to rescue the president. I thought about Charles Bronson playing the part, a tough guy at the time.

[But] the project came along in '80 and I cast Kurt Russell. I'd just worked with him in ELVIS and I really loved working with him. Here's this Disney kid and he's tough as nails, and he created a real memorable character [out of Snake Plissken].

FM. Did you have carte blanche after HALLOWEEN in terms of your casting choices? Or was there any pressure from your distributor, Avco Embassy Pictures, to go with a more established star?

JC. Well, we had discussions about it. They were uncertain about Kurt as a hero. They said, 'Well, he's just this Disney kid.' I said, 'No, no, no. He can play this. He can play anything. Believe me, he can play anything. He played Elvis, he can play Snake Plissken.' So they relented. I mean, they wanted to talk about it and they wouldn't be doing their job if they didn't say, 'We have concerns about this. I'm not sure that he can do the part.' That's fine with me. I went ahead and defended him. I'm glad I did.

(Continued)

JOHN CARPENTER'S COMICS

These days, when he's not touring the globe with his band playing original music from his memorable movie soundtracks and LOST THEMES albums, Carpenter has been writing comic books. He credits his wife with spearheading the production of his two titles, JOHN CARPENTER'S ASYLUM and JOHN CARPENTER'S TALES FOR A HALLOWEEN NIGHT VOL. I, and now he is contributing a story to FM's own TALES FROM THE ACKER-MANSION, a hardcover comic-book anthology of weird and horrifying stories by some of the top names in the film, music, and comic-book worlds. The anthology is being produced for Forrest Ackerman's centennial celebration, and is hosted by none other than Forry's infamous alter ego, Dr. Acula!



Carpenter's ACKER-MANSION tale is taken from his newest edition of TALES FOR A HALLOWEEN NIGHT — a haunting tale of greed, treachery, and malice. Set in the late 1930s amid the exotic alleys of a grand bazaar in Morocco, a foreign traveler comes across a jeweled box which intrigues him, and becomes even more drawn to it after its owner refuses to sell it to him. A stranger in a strange land should heed the warnings, but this being a John Carpenter story, of course he doesn't. The art in the story is by Dennis Calero (X-FACTOR, LEGEND OF SUPERHEROES, and KOLCHAK).



"I love writing comics," says Carpenter. "It's just so different. It's a different narrative style than I'm used to, but it's so much fun! So I presented FM with a severed-head story. I kind of like. I was trying to think back the other day — severed-head movies, you know — and there haven't been too many of them. But I remember one, THE THING THAT WOULDN'T DIE, back in 1958. It wasn't a great movie, but there was that severed head that kept possessing everybody."

'Nuff said! Limited-edition copies of TALES FROM THE ACKER-MANSION will be released Halloween weekend at FM's ALIEN CON event in Silicon Valley, CA.



FM. Well, we're all glad you did! How collaborative was Kurt at that stage with developing his character? Or was he like, "This is what's on the page, let's just dive in"?
JC. Well, Kurt as an actor you have to understand he was Disney trained. So he doesn't come in with a lot of line changes at that time. As he became a big movie star later, he worked a little bit more behind the scenes. But then it was just, "Say the lines that are there." His main contribution was as soon as he found out that Lee Van Cleef was in the movie, he said, "I know what I'm doing. Imitate Clint Eastwood!"

FM. You've got a wonderful rogues' gallery of actors in this film. I know you love working with the same people over and over. What went into some of the casting choices for ESCAPE? Was Jamie Lee Curtis ever considered?
JC. There wasn't really a part for Jamie Lee in this. She was in a TV series as I remember. We had various parts written so we had to fill them up with actors who were good. Ernest Borgnine is just an amazing character actor. I mean, it's amazing! God bless him, you couldn't get better than Ernie. There's Harry Dean Stanton, who's still an awesome guy. I care for him very much. I mean, on and on. Everybody in the movie was great.

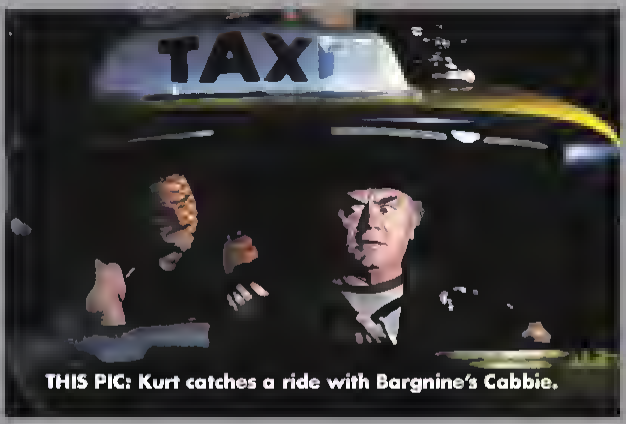
FM. Were there any doubts this project might not get the green light because you didn't quite have the budget to build a rundown urban environment like you imagined in the script?
JC. We knew it was going to go because it had a green light, so we were going to shoot the movie no matter what. The question was how big a spectacle could we afford to make. That was always the question. So we found St. Louis had had a fire in mid '70s and their downtown area was just ruined. And it was desolate. They were great. They let us come in there and shut everything down, shut the lights off — it was unbelievable cooperation. They had a lot of decrepit stuff around, so we found a location that worked, that let us get the spectacle that we needed. So therefore the movie didn't suffer a small look. It had a big look, which made me *very* happy.

FM. Do you remember any specific surprises on the shoot or things you were unable to get due to budget or location constraints?
JC. Every day we shot [at] night, because most of these [scenes] were at night — that was a new surprise. Sometimes good, sometimes very, very bad, and we had to punt. Every production is that way, unless you have all the money in the world. We didn't. Just to make the schedule is the big thing. Nothing big surprised me. Nothing big hurt the story. We didn't have to do anything to change the narrative, which is the thing you want to protect as a director — right to the very end is the narrative. If you start changing that, you're lost.

FM. You're well-known for scoring your own films. Do you have a certain approach when you're doing a score? Do you take thematics into account, or is it more about tone and creating suspense?
JC. I think it's everything that you just mentioned. It's thematic but it's also tone. Most of the music that I've done for movies is improvised at the moment with that footage. The main theme from ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, parts of that I had in my head before we recorded it. Just little snatches here and there. I stuck it together. These things come



ABOVE: Donald Pleasence as the downed president. **THIS PIC:** Don't mess with Barbeau's Maggie!



THIS PIC: Kurt catches a ride with Bargnine's Cabbie.

FM. I remember after 300, Gerard Butler was lined up to do it.
JC. That's right, then he dropped out, and then they moved on, and then [FAST & FURIOUS producer] Neil Moritz took on the producing reins, and he couldn't get it set up. And now it's over at FOX and they're trying to get it done. I'm just sitting back relaxing, because I don't have to worry. I worried back in 1980 when we were shooting the film. I worried a lot back then. But now I don't worry at all!

FM. I talked to Kurt about it a couple of years ago, and it was very important to him that whoever plays Snake is 100% American. What's your take on that?
JC. [laughs] Well, you have to understand. Kurt is kind of a Tea Party guy. He's really right wing and nationalistic. So anything he plays, I think he would feel very proud of the fact that Snake Plissken is an American and has American values, and that's fine with me. As long as he's a tough-ass, I don't care.

FM. Well it's a great, beloved film, and like Kurt said, regardless of whether they remake it or not, the original is out there. If people want it, there it is.
JC. That's right. It's not going anywhere!

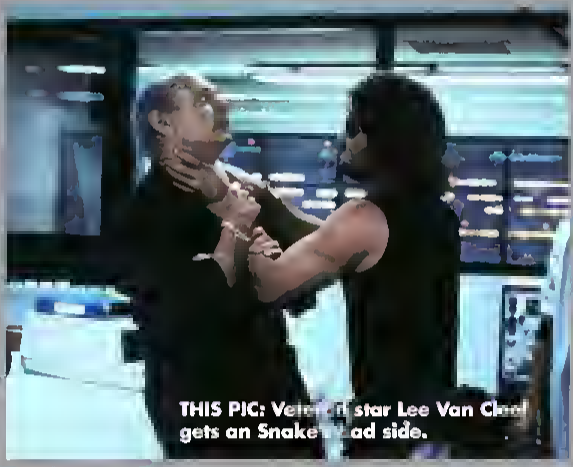
"The movie is just a silly adventure in the future, but it's *fun*."

out of instinct — at least they do for me. I'm not a kind of a guy who can write music. So I don't write music. I improvise it, just play it to the image. And luckily, the music from ESCAPE worked out.

FM. How do you think ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK holds up 35 years later? Are you critical when you look back at your work? Or do you allow it to live in a time capsule from the era?
JC. I can't watch it because I'm too critical of the things I've done. Once the movie's cut together and I've seen the print, that's it. I don't want to look at it again. Because it's over. Kurt's character, Snake Plissken, has lived in memory, and in the culture, and is extremely strong. And the cast and the acting in the movie is extremely strong. And the fun of it — the movie is just a silly adventure in the future, but it's *fun*. It's dark and fun. And that's lived on, so I'm really proud of the film. I'm *really* happy about it.

FM. Was there ever any discussion of reuniting with Kurt as Snake Plissken after you did ESCAPE FROM L.A.? Or was that the definitive end?
JC. That was sort of the end of talking about it. We had discussions about other kinds of projects, but no. And then now they're trying to do a remake of it, and they probably will go for a younger guy to play Snake Plissken. But that's the way it goes.

FM. They've been talking about this remake for years and years.
JC. They have. It has been years and years, you're absolutely right.


THIS PIC: Veteran star Lee Van Cleef gets an Snake-eyed side.

THE RETURN OF HALLOWEEN

In May, Blumhouse Productions announced that it would be producing a brand-new HALLOWEEN film, and that John Carpenter had officially signed on to the project as executive producer and creative consultant. The franchise has meandered back and forth between seven films that had original star Jamie Lee Curtis coming and going three times; two reboot entries directed by Rob Zombie, and an anthology concept that had nothing to do with Michael Myers. HALLOWEEN III: SEASON OF THE WITCH.

Now, Carpenter thinks it's time to go back to basics, declaring that what makes Michael so scary is "he's a force of nature, like the wind." He explains of the new project's genesis, "Miramax got the rights back from the Weinsteins to make a sequel, so they went to Jason Blum, and Jason had the idea, 'Let me go to John Carpenter and get him on board and sort of godfather this through, and we'll do something together.' We have no idea what we're going to do yet. It's just, 'We're going to try a HALLOWEEN with Michael Myers in the mask,' I guess. Other than that, anything's up for grabs."





TERRY GILLIAM TURNS BACK

TIME BANDITS

By David Weiner

In 1981, Terry Gilliam's whimsical fantasy-adventure TIME BANDITS enthralled audiences young and old with wit and clever storytelling. Now, the inimitable writer-director/former Monty Python trouper shares new behind-the-scenes tales of working with Sean Connery, George Harrison, an untried child actor — and the most entertaining band of dwarves he's ever had the pleasure of knowing.

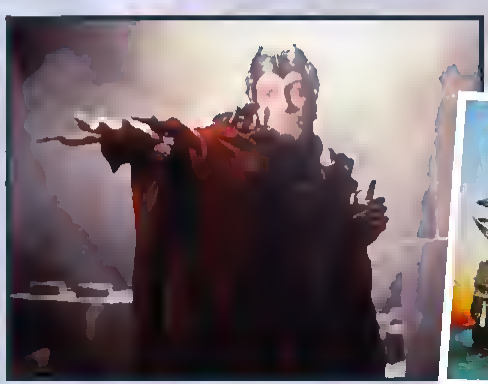
Terry Gilliam's brilliant TIME BANDITS topped the box office and changed the way we look at family entertainment more than three decades ago with its philosophical challenges and subversive wit. Of course, time is a relative thing. Speaking with FM, the director chuckles when he thinks how time has flown by in the blink of an eye since debuting the film that boosted his career. "I haven't grown a day," he laughs. "The film hasn't either. It's just everything else has grown old."

TIME BANDITS follows the fantastic adventure of a wide-eyed boy named Kevin (played by Craig Warnock), who is whisked away by a band of unwieldy dwarves intent on looting through the ages, thanks to a map of time holes stolen from their boss, the Supreme Being. As they swindle their way from portal to portal, they cross paths with Napoleon (played by Ian Holm), Robin Hood (John Cleese), King Agamemnon (Sean Connery) of ancient Greece, an ogre and his wife (Peter Vaughan and Katherine Helmond) in the Land of Legends, an oblivious giant, and more. All the while, the embodiment of Evil (David Warner) is intent on luring the good-natured thieves into his Fortress of Ultimate Darkness so he can steal the map and remake the universe to his liking.

"I got [this idea] about a bunch of people that were involved in working for God during the creation and living in heaven, who just got bored with that nice, lovely, heavenly lifestyle and wanted to go out on the road to start robbing and pillaging, having some fun," explains Gilliam, who had decided to write a family film after growing impatient waiting for funding for what would become his subsequent film, BRAZIL. "I wanted to do it all from the kid's point of view. I wanted the camera to be low. And I didn't think we could get a kid who could carry the whole film on his shoulders, so let's make all the Time Bandits the size of the kid. Short. Dwarves! And it kind of grew that way."

ESCAPE FROM PYTHON

Gilliam had co-directed 1975's MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL with Terry Jones, the first wholly original big-screen outing for the British comedy troupe — and a massive hit. Looking to carve his own path from Python, Gilliam made his solo directing





"I WAS TRYING DESPERATELY TO ESCAPE FROM MONTY PYTHON."







debut with 1977's JABBERWOCKY, a grittier take on the Middle Ages that starred fellow Python Michael Palin. Full of offbeat humor, the film also featured Jones and Gilliam in cameo appearances. "I was trying desperately to escape from Python," muses the director. "It was a silly way to escape from Python by doing a medieval film with Terry Jones and Michael Palin in it as well.

As Python's members gradually went their separate ways, Gilliam tapped his good working relationship with Palin and recruited him to co-write TIME BANDITS. "All those ideas all sort of tumbled out of my brain over a weekend, and then I called up Mike Palin and was sort of babbling on about all these things and said, 'Come on. Let's write it together,'" he explains. And though he was determined that TIME BANDITS wasn't going to be "another Python film," he nevertheless ended up casting two other Pythons in it. "Originally, Robin Hood was supposed to be played by Mike, and then our manager [Denis O'Brien], to help assure the money, proposed the idea of John Cleese playing Robin Hood. And I could see immediately how much funnier John would be as Robin Hood. Much more overbearing and more upper class than Mike. And also him bending over the dwarves would be much funnier because his height. So that's what happened, and it was one of those moments that Mike did the honest thing: he sacrificed himself for the greater good of the film and took on the other part that he did [as the hopelessly lovelorn Vincent opposite Shelley Duvall's Pansy]."

LINING UP THE TIME BANDITS

Casting the role of Kevin turned out to be one of those great Hollywood stories — Warnock had tagged along with his brother to the audition and ended up getting the role. Gilliam wanted an unpolished, naturalistic child actor, and Warnock fit the bill. "He was a bright kid," says the director. "He didn't, in many ways, have to act a lot. At first, it was just making him feel comfortable, and once he survived being thrown into the deep water with Sean Connery on day one, two and three, he kind of got into it. And there was something very natural about him. I never felt he was acting. He just did it. So he was really very easy."

In the roles of the Time Bandits, Gilliam cast David Rappaport as Randall, Jack Purvis as Wally, Kenny Baker as Fidgit, Malcolm Dixon as Strutter, Mike Edmonds as Og, and Tiny Ross as Vermin. Each actor welcomed the opportunity to play a more straightforward character, rather than the novelty roles they were used to getting due to their diminutive sizes, and they more than rose to the challenge. "Kenny Baker lived in a tin can as R2-D2! Jack Purvis was one of the Ewoks! So you never saw them, they were always hidden from

"SEAN CONNERY'S A **CLASS ACT.** REALLY. HE IS SUCH A **MONUMENTAL FIGURE** IN REAL LIFE, FORGET ABOUT ON FILM."



ABOVE: The brutal first day in Morocco: Gilliam had to contend with epic heat and a nervous newbie.
RIGHT: A reference Polaroid from the set shows Gilliam directing young Craig Warnock and Sean Connery.



TOP: John Cleese as Robin Hood, a part originally planned for Michael Palin. RIGHT: David Warner as Evil; the Time Bandits must confront him at The Fortress of Ultimate Darkness (BELOW).



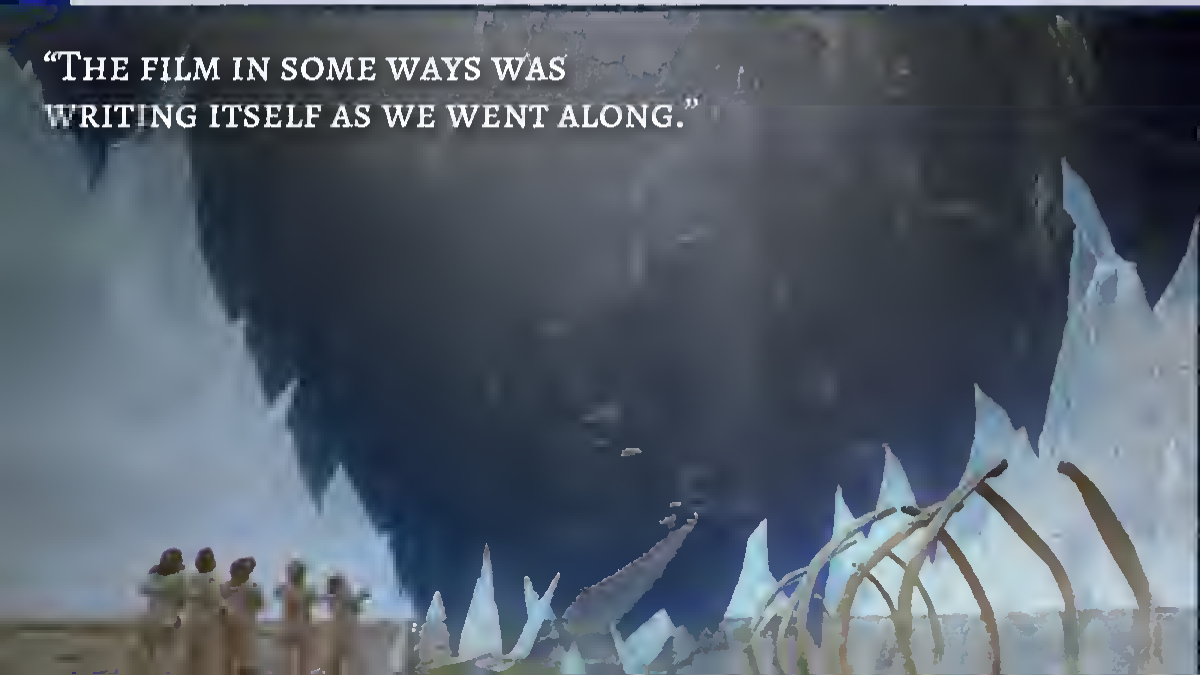
the world," observes Gilliam. "They had really never been given a chance to act, and some really shone. Jack Purvis, to me, just became wonderful. And I used things like that."

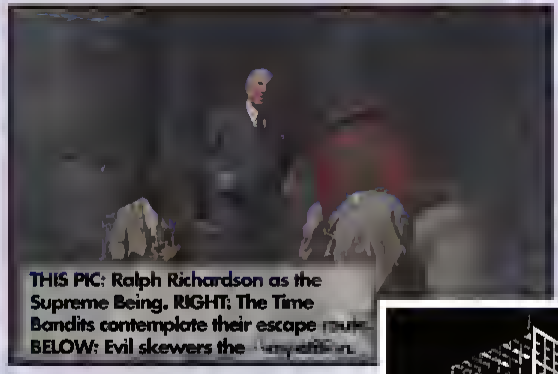
In fact, Gilliam used Purvis' exceptional talent for a reworked scene during the film's final battle when the original had to be cut. "Sean Connery was originally supposed to come back with all of his archers for that big showdown with Evil, and we couldn't afford him," explains Gilliam. "And Sean Connery as Agamemnon, the surrogate father, was the one who died in that scene. Because I couldn't get him back, because his contract was finished, I had to kill one of the Time Bandits. Fidgit was always the one that I knew the kids would like the most, so I killed Fidgit. That seemed to be a good thing to do. And that allowed Jack to really pull out the stops emotionally — anger and everything. It was a great moment. So the film in some ways was writing itself as we went along because we were unable to do what we originally planned."

Another intriguing omission from the film that led to an inspired resolution was a sequence that was to take place in the Land of Legends. "It involved two spider-women who basically used their webs to catch beautiful, young, blond knights and keep them for themselves," explains Gilliam. "It was a really funny scene, but we ran out of money, so it got the chop. And the result of that was that we had a huge gap between escaping from the giant and getting to the Fortress of Ultimate Darkness. And so I just came up with this idea: 'OK, what you do to save money is we're already at the Fortress of Ultimate Darkness, because it's behind an invisible barrier, which we can't see through. Ah! That works!' And then we went down with the Time Bandits down to Dungeness on the coast and shot this one scene some time after we had finished the main film and it plugged that gap. It's actually quite a nice idea, because I liked the idea of an invisible barrier that we can't see. And it would be great fun, having all of them pressing their faces up against this barrier, squishing their noses and all."

CONVINCING CONNERY

Despite a dip in Connery's career at the time, Gilliam never expected to actually land the mega-star as King Agamemnon. He chuckles, "The script actually read, 'When the great warrior removes his helmet, he reveals himself to be none other than Sean Connery — or an actor of equal-but-cheaper stature.' And Mike and I put that in as a joke. And our manager, a less-than-humorous person, took it seriously and got Connery." O'Brien was playing golf with the former James Bond and took that opportunity to hit him up to try the role. "I





THIS PIC: Ralph Richardson as the Supreme Being. RIGHT: The Time Bandits contemplate their escape route. BELOW: Evil skewers the [illegible]



"I NEVER LEARN. THAT'S ONE OF MY **STRENGTHS** AND **WEAKNESSES.**"

think Sean liked what Python was doing and I think it was a chance for him to play a father figure, which, maybe in real life, he hadn't been as present a father as he would have liked," surmises Gilliam, confirming that Connery did indeed see that "great warrior" line in the script. "I think he must have found that incredibly funny. That's the thing about Sean — he's got a wonderful sense of humor."

Gilliam credits Connery for offering sage advice the first day of filming TIME BANDITS, an incredibly hot one in Morocco. "The first stuff we shot, the first scene, was the fight with the warrior and the kid arriving," recalls Gilliam. "Sean is so pragmatic and so experienced, he actually saved my ass, because Craig Warnock completely froze. He was frightened. So I was spending all my time with him. And Sean says 'Cut out half these shots you've got planned with me. Just concentrate on the kid. Get me out of here quickly.' . . . He's a class act. Really. He is such a monumental figure in real life, forget about on film."

CONCENTRATED EVIL

BRAZIL star Jonathan Pryce was Gilliam's first casting choice for the character of Evil, but the actor was unavailable at the time of production. In his stead, the director looked to David Warner, having loved the serious actor's turn in the 1966 comedy MORGAN — A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT. "I wasn't actually thinking of somebody who was necessarily well known for playing evil characters," remembers Gilliam, observing, "The character becomes ridiculous because of David's intensity, and his focus is just wonderful because he's not playing it for laughs. And yet, you laugh, because we all can see he's mad and he's surrounded himself with such pathetic helpers to make himself look even better. To soothe his own massive ego."

One person who didn't have a massive ego was executive producer George Harrison, whose Handmade Films helped fund TIME BANDITS (the company was originally formed with O'Brien to finance MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN). "He was great. He came on the set once, and that was it," recalls Gilliam, pointing out that Harrison, being a creative type, chose not to meddle. "The Beatles certainly didn't want people interfering, and he understood that. . . . He was just a great support.

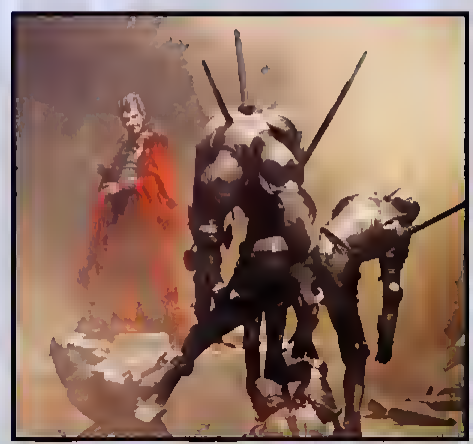
When I started having fights with Denis O'Brien over his ridiculous ideas of cuts, that was the only time you could see George wasn't happy doing this stuff. The interesting way he dealt with it was writing the lyrics of [the film's end-titles tune "Dream Away"]. Afterwards, I found out these were his notes to me! It's just a song — it didn't mean anything — but there's lines in there about not being thankful and not taking up any more time. . . . I think he felt I was a little bit more arrogant than I should have been, with he and Denis having mortgaged their buildings and done all sorts of stuff [for the film]. Yeah, I should have been a bit more grateful. And it's all in the lyrics."

20/20 VISION AND A TIME BANDITS TV SERIES

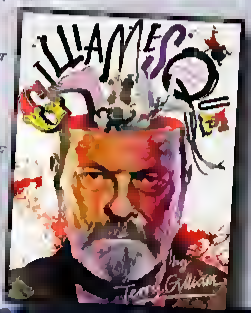
Summing up his thoughts on the final cut of TIME BANDITS, Gilliam shares, "I looked at it, I think it was a year or two ago, when they did a Blu-ray version here in the States, and I thought it looked amazingly good considering how little it cost. It just really held up. I was really proud of it."

Asked if he learned any key lessons from the trials and tribulations of making the film, he responds with a giggle. "No, I never learn. That's one of my strengths and weaknesses. But what TIME BANDITS did do because of its success in America — it was, like, No. 1 for five weeks — that sort of opened up the doors that allowed BRAZIL and [THE ADVENTURES OF BARON] MUNCHAUSEN to happen."

And while a follow-up to TIME BANDITS was in the works in the late '90s that was slated to be a series on Hallmark Channel, Gilliam says that the network pulled the plug on the project shortly after 9/11 due to changing climates. But there seems to be hope on the horizon after so many years in turnaround. "We've been dealing with the BBC, and it looks like they're going to be doing a series on TIME BANDITS," reveals Gilliam. "It's not been announced — I assume maybe not everything is signed and sealed, so that's just a possibility at the moment. But a very good one!"



Follow Terry Gilliam on Twitter @TerryGilliam and look for his entertaining biography GILLIAMESQUE: A PRE-POSTHUMOUS MEMOIR, available now



CRAFTING THE VISUAL WITCHCRAFT OF

WARCRAFT



FM editor David Weiner checks the top box of his uber-geek bucket list by touring the halls of special-effects titan Industrial Light & Magic and learning a few WARCRAFT trade secrets with director Duncan Jones and the film's VFX supervisors.

By David Weiner

STAR WARS. INDIANA JONES. E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL. JURASSIC PARK. THE AVENGERS. Since the late '70s, so many of the greatest genre films, franchises, and top money makers in Hollywood have one major thing in common: special effects by Industrial Light & Magic.

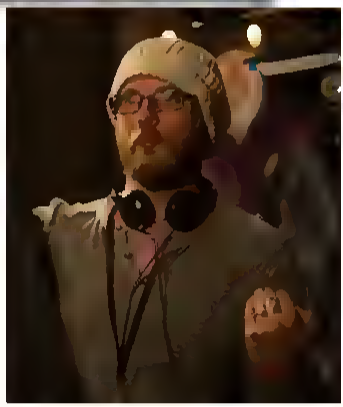
A division of Lucasfilm, Ltd., the effects house was created in 1975 by visionary filmmaker George Lucas to handle the dazzling visuals workload of STAR WARS, and the pioneering company has been at the forefront of cinematic technology ever since. Hand in hand with models, miniatures, matte paintings, and mechanical effects, ILM has also been a major innovator in CGI technology, demonstrating quantum leaps in developments between such films as THE ABYSS, JURASSIC PARK, PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST, AVATAR, THE AVENGERS, and now WARCRAFT.

In WARCRAFT, the denizens of the human realm of Azeroth are faced with an invading horde of orcs, who have traveled through a portal to escape their dying world. As the two opposing races collide, thoughtful leaders on either side must determine if alternatives to war can be found. Travis Fimmel, Dominic Cooper, and Ben Foster play some of the key players of Azeroth, while Toby Kebbell, Robert Kazinsky, Clancy Brown, and Paula Patton portray the pivotal orcs.

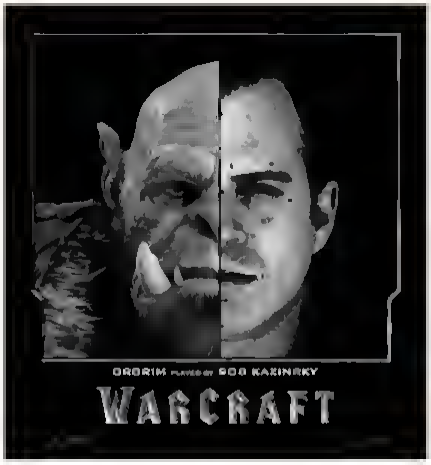
"One of the things that was the biggest challenge with this film was obviously knowing how we were going to approach making the orcs themselves," says WARCRAFT director Duncan Jones, whose previous projects were SOURCE CODE and MOON, both effects-driven films, but to a much lesser degree in comparison. "We needed to have a way of portraying the orcs in a way where you could hold a closeup. Where you would actually have *characters*, people that you would empathize with and that would actually keep your interest."

In order to relatably humanize a major CG-driven summer movie based on the massive multiplayer online role-playing game WORLD OF WARCRAFT, Jones knew that he had to concentrate on a compelling story with multiple sympathetic points of view, first and foremost. "My interest is in human storytelling," he tells FM, "in finding stories that get at the core of how people behave towards each other, how conflicts arise, and how they do or don't get dealt with."

Once that task was accomplished on the page, the next step was to enlist the wizards at ILM to create convincing characters from a mystical realm. ILM's WARCRAFT visual effects supervisor Jeff White says, "All of our technology development on this film was really geared around, 'How do we make sure that the performance that's on [the main orc] Durotan is authentic to what [actor] Toby Kebbell did on set?' This film was really a checklist of all the most difficult things to do in computer graphics: Skin. Eyes. Long, braided hair. As my five-year-old twins can attest, I cannot braid hair to save my life, so there was a lot of research and development as far as figuring that out. But everybody was geared towards making sure that when you watch the film, you care as much about these orcs as you do their human counterparts."



Jones adds, "I want to sit for five, eight, ten seconds on a closeup of one of these characters, then I want to understand what it is that they're thinking about. You can do that with a human being. But you can't do that with someone covered in prosthetics. So I think Jeff and his team gave us this amazing, amazing facial-capture technology, which they had advanced from the work they had





already done on Hulk in the first AVENGERS movie. And really, they delivered in spades, but we didn't know that at the time we started making the movie. So there was a little bit of a lag between us starting production and us actually knowing for sure that these closeups were going to hold to that level of detail. And when we first got our delivery of the finished shot — all of us, we had a little party."

In addition to the simplest moments focused on facial expressions, the landscapes and the fight choreography of WARCRAFT also provided challenges for the ILM visual effects team to step up to and solve. "We use motion capture for an awful lot of the work we do," says White. "Occasionally there are times where actors just don't have the reflexes to pull off the fight moves that we want, and [ILM animation supervisor Hal Hickel] and his amazing team made that whole fight choreography work."

Hickel, whose focus is on character and creature performance including the orcs, large frost wolves, and majestic griffins, candidly shares that the team was trepidatious heading into the project due to the nature of how much screen time the orcs have in the film — pretty much an equal amount to the live-action performers — and the fact that the orcs are so close to humans in their depictions, and humans are "famously difficult to do credibly." More challenging than the epic battles that occur in the film are the quieter moments in which the orcs simply must "be," or breathe, or act natural, as the narrative action goes on around them. But that challenge proved to be a refreshing change for Hickel and his team. "The thing we're fondest of, or I am, after coming out of the other side of this project, [is doing this particular orc character work] because we so rarely get to do this kind of thing; we're usually creating monsters or creatures and aliens and things that are not just sitting there like this."

Another element that viewers may take for granted when watching the final cut of the film is the simple proximity of the orcs to the humans, given their massive frames and size. "Difficult stuff," says Hickel of the motion-capture process that strived to have the orc and human actors in the same frame, together in the moment, before the layered pixel work would begin. But their high-tech approach to visualizing the endgame product while filming in real time was made much easier with a system that allowed in-camera visuals of the orcs for size reference.

Hickel explains, "We began pioneering motion-capture work back in 2004 with [the tentacled] Davy Jones in the second PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN film, that style of motion capture was sort of a lightweight, portable capture we could take anywhere — mountaintops, steamy jungles, whatever. And the trade-off for its portability was the fidelity was not as high in terms of capturing every nuance of the body motion. But for WARCRAFT, we knew that [the film] was going to largely be shot on really elaborate sets, but indoors on soundstages, so we thought, 'All right, let's bring proper studio-style motion capture and meld it with a shooting set with lights and actors so we can get the best of both worlds.' And we had this real-time [video] overlay of kind of game-level orcs on top of our live actors, so that the cameraman could really frame on the bulk of an orc — and not Toby, or Rob or whoever was playing the orc — and we could also tell the actors [how to best position themselves]. Duncan could really compose his shots correctly."

ILM's incredible attention to every detail on the orcs in WARCRAFT — from the bones interlocked with their braids to the pores of their skin — is what sells these



ABOVE & BELOW: The digital progression from actor to orc. RIGHT: An orc horde breakdown and size-comparison chart. OPPOSITE PAGE: Duncan Jones directs the Azeroth action.





perceived brutes as sympathetic characters. On top of every facial expression and nuanced movement by the actors being captured and processed to portray each ore moment, the added layers of costume and hair movement, and the implied weight of such things as a necklace or a strand of hair, make or break those moments. Interestingly, it's also easy to forget that the costumes the orcs wear are entirely CGI.

"If you really stop and look at those costumes, there are so many elements and they all have to interact at all times," says VFX supervisor Jason Smith, who also finessed the details of Hulk in THE AVENGERS. "There was really an incredible amount of complexity in the costumes, and I have no hesitation saying that they're the most complicated costumes we've created and simulated here. ... Another area that we attempted to level up in is our skin development. And to start out with that, we actually went back to a practical approach, doing a live cast of one of our primary orcs, Rob Kazinsky. And from this life cast, we pulled his actual pore detail. Starting from this was a real part of getting that initial look to at least feel human before we started pushing the orc aesthetic. And that's something that we found ourselves doing quite a bit, was let's try to get something real first. Let's try to get something human first. And then push it from there, so we know when we're deviating."

Making realistic CG humanoids on celluloid is indeed a tricky business. Viewers can edge toward that "uncanny valley" of unconscious repulsion due to interactions that appear inhuman, and at that point it's "game over." So perhaps it's this attention to the tiniest little details on the orcs and other living creatures that makes WARCRAFT a work of digital art, regardless of what one may think of the film's overall narrative.

WARCRAFT is in theaters now.
Follow Duncan Jones and ILM on Twitter @ManMadeMoon and @ILMVFX.



Behind Closed Doors at ILM

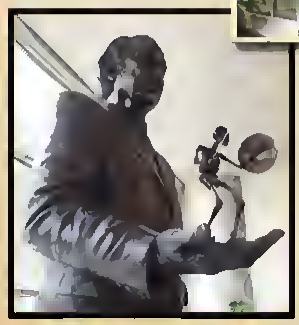


ILM is not simply a company that services film productions, commercials, videogames, and the like with visual effects. It's a wellspring of creativity that has fueled the fantasy of our collective cinematic dreams. So having an opportunity to see where it all happens, and to meet some of the players of ILM — who not surprisingly have a fundamental love for *Famous Monsters* — was truly a dream come true for me.



Ever wonder what it's like behind closed doors at ILM? Now owned by Disney, the company's collection of buildings has been located at the Bay-adjacent Presidio in San Francisco since 2005 (and in San Rafael and Van Nuys, CA, before that) at the Letterman Digital Arts Center, with a beautiful view of the Golden Gate Bridge. Employees and guests are greeted by the iconic, bronze Yoda fountain before they step inside the lobby of the tasteful, Prairie-style building.

In the lobby, look left and you'll see a life-sized Darth Vader and Boba Fett there to greet you.



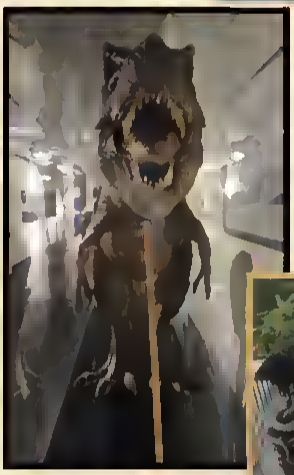
LEFT: FM editor David Weiner at ILM's Yoda Fountain. ABOVE: The Lucasfilm/ILM lobby, home to the spectacular Willis O'Brien statue; Ray Harryhausen represents.

amid library shelves of books and gleaming awards. Look straight, and you'll see a majestic statue of legendary KING KONG stop-motion animator Willis O'Brien puppeteering Kong atop the Empire State Building. A nearby building also features a life-sized statue of O'Brien protege (and stop-motion master in his own right) Ray Harryhausen holding one of the skeletons from JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS in the palm of his hand. These people do not forget their foundations.

Inside the employees-only hallways of the facility, the walls are lined with George Lucas' impressive collection of vintage, international movie posters, ranging from CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (L'Etrange Creature du Lac Noir) to BLAZING SADDLES (Mezzogiorno e Mezzo Di Fuoco). Lining the walls, shelves, and ledges is a treasure trove of items from all of your favorite films growing up. One









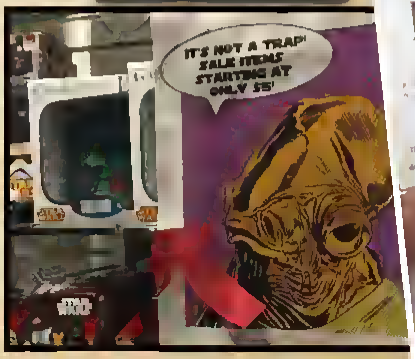
ABOVE: Hallways lined with George Lucas' movie poster art. LEFT: An original screen-used E.T., JURASSIC PARK T. rex, and Davy Jones bust. BELOW: Treats on sale at the company store!

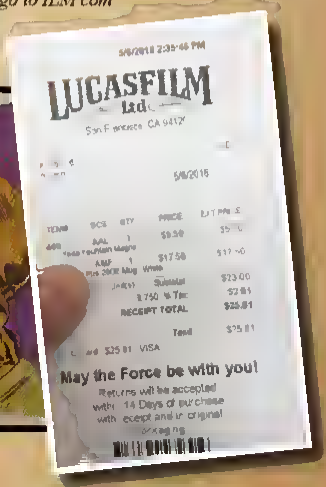
stretch between buildings displays busts of the squid-like Davy Jones from the PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN franchise side by side with a JURASSIC PARK velociraptor and Draco from DRAGONHEART. At the end of the hallway, three-quarters of an original E.T. the Extraterrestrial sits on a square, and two Shmers from GHOSTBUSTERS, one just a mechanical head, one complete, stare you down. That ominous painting of Vigo the Carpathian from GHOSTBUSTERS II also follows you around the room. Around the corner, dangling above a stairwell, are large models of the Protector and the villainous Sarris' ship from GALAXY QUEST. A massive miniature of Count Olaf's house from LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS sits in a corner. A miniature of The Messiah spaceship from DEEP IMPACT rests on a platform. On the main floor, one can see a pair of original stormtrooper costumes from the first STAR WARS trilogy across from a glass-encased Tyrannosaurus rex from THE LOST WORLD. And for morning and afternoon caffeinated beverages, pixel pushers can refuel at, where else? "Javva the Hutt."

A final stop before leaving ILM, one has to play at the Lucasfilm Company Store. The small space sells everything from the expected STAR WARS toys and T-shirts and select, high-end franchise items to ILM production shirts, Skywalker Ranch Fire & Rescue coffee mugs (emblazoned with the Millennium Falcon), limited-edition Yoda Fountain miniatures — and bargain-bin items advertised by an Admiral Ackbar sign proclaiming, "It's not a trap! Sale items starting at only $5!"

And, of course, the sales receipt declares, "May the Force be with you."

For more on Industrial Light & Magic, go to ILM.com





PREVIEW

FIRST CONTACT: ALIEN CON 2016

Uncle Forry, ANCIENT ALIENS, and all things extra-terrestrial will be celebrated as FAMOUS MONSTERS teams up with HISTORY and A+E Network for the ultimate out-of-this-world convention.

Looking for a close encounter this October? Famous Monsters' event division Cosmic Con has partnered with History and A+E to bring you the first convention of its kind: Alien Con. Devoted to all things intergalactic, the event will include stars, costumes, parties, and plenty of surprises.

For three days over Halloween weekend (Oct. 28-30), we're bringing together the stars of the hit History series ANCIENT ALIENS, now in its 11th season, including Giorgio A. Tsoukalos, David H. Childress, Jason Martell, Jonathan Young, Linda Moulton Howe, and Kevin Burns, to talk about space, science, and stars. Additionally, we've lined up Oscar nominee Edward James Olmos from BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, Veronica Cartwright (ALIEN, THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK, THE BIRDS), LAND OF THE LOST stars Wesley Eure, Kathy Coleman, and Phillip Paley, special effects wizards Dave and Lou Elsey from FARSCAPE, LOGAN'S RUN writer William F. Nolan, and the surviving LOST IN SPACE cast — June Lockhart, Mark Goddard, Marta Kristen, Bill Mumy, Angela Cartwright, and the Robot himself, B-9 — plus many other of your favorite Sci-Fi celebs. There will even be an exclusive, never-before-seen episode of ANCIENT ALIENS! This one explores the theory that there's been a top-secret, large-scale alien hunt that's been going on for decades!

There won't just be Hollywood stars either. You can be your own star at our cosplay costume ball and contest. Dress up as your favorite creature, character, or Klingon and celebrate the man who







LEFT: ANCIENT ALIENS icons Giorgio A. Tsoukalos and David H. Childress will be at ALIEN CON.

OPPOSITE: Special guests expected include GALACTICA's Edward James Olmos, the LOST IN SPACE remaining cast; LAND OF THE LOST's Wesley Eure, Kathy Coleman, and Phillip Paley; ALIEN star Veronica Cartwright; and three top Godzilla suit actors!

invented cosplaying — our intrepid honorary editor in chief, Forrest J Ackerman — on what would have been his centennial birthday.

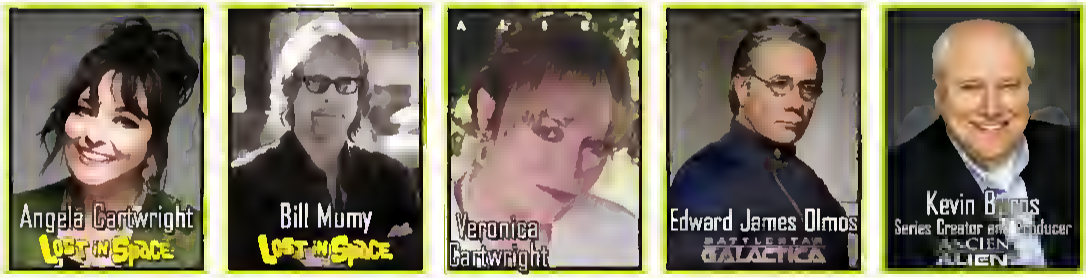
To that end, we're also premiering TALES FROM THE ACKER-MANSION, an anthology of short graphic stories, art, and comic-book tales of terror, commemorating Uncle Forry and his contribution to our culture. Some of the biggest names in the business are donating their time and talents to the anthology, including legendary filmmaker John Carpenter (HALLOWEEN, THE THING, THEY LIVE), novelist and screenwriter Richard Christian Matheson (THE INCREDIBLE HULK, TALES FROM THE CRYPT, KNIGHT RIDER), graphic novelist Cullen Bunn (SIXTH GUN, DEADPOOL, AQUAMAN), graphic artist Drew Moss (THE CROW: PESTILENCE, THE COLONIZED, TERRIBLE LIZARD), Marilyn Manson/Rob Zombie guitarist John 5, and many others.

It's all taking place in Silicon Valley in Santa Clara, CA, and there are several Alien Con packages, including a "Close Encounter" family pack of four weekend passes, including entry to the Friday night preview/costume party, and to both Saturday and Sunday's events at the convention; a "First Contact" package, which includes everything in the "Close Encounter" pass, plus a collectible messenger bag, an exclusive ANCIENT ALIENS cast photo op and autographs, and our exclusive ANCIENT ALIENS T-shirt; and an "Outer Limits" VIP tour package, including everything from both previous packages and entrance into our exclusive celebrity banquet/party — good eats and drinks with out-of-this-world company.

We look forward to stargazing with you!

Go to TheAlienCon.com to learn more about the different pricing levels and lodging, to buy merchandise, and to keep up with all the news as it breaks.

A Sampling of Our Featured Guests!







FRIDAY, OCT 28 - SUNDAY, OCT 30 2016

Santa Clara Convention Center

Santa Clara, CA

This past March, Famous Monsters and its comic book imprint American Gothic Press held the first annual Silver Scream Festival in Santa Rosa, CA, in which a portion of the festival submission process was a call for original graphic novels. We didn't know what to expect, but when we came across Jon Clark's THIN, we knew we had a winner.



THIN is a completely unconventional horror story about an overweight woman who encounters a nightmare when she attempts a miracle weight cure. The story's most compelling moments are when the ordinary protagonist has to use sheer willpower to overcome her situation, employing gritty and often disturbing means. It's intimate and visceral and completely unlike anything in comics today, and for that reason, we knew we had to publish it. Take a look at a few interior pages of THIN by Jon Clark, shipping to comic stores in September.



STORY AND ART: Jon Clark
LETTERS: April Brown
EDITING: Holly Interlandi and Jorge Marrero

For more news on THIN and other titles from American Gothic Press, follow us on:

/AGPMonsters

AmericonGothicPress.com


YES, I DO
CREAK
CREAK
OH.
THIS ISN'T SO BAD... EXCEPT...
HAVE A SEAT. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
GRRRR
GRRRR
THE DOGS AT THE WINDOW


OKAY. FOR YOU I'M GOING TO REMOVE THIS, THIS HERE, ALL OF THIS, AND THIS HERE
YOU HAVE SEVEN, MAYBE EIGHT INCISIONS. EACH WILL BE A STRAIGHT TWO INCHES LONG BUT THEY HEAL IN NO TIME
YOU GET INTO GOWN, I TAKE YOU INTO OPERATING ROOM, GIVE YOU LITTLE SOMETHING TO
WHEN YOU WAKE UP...
THIN.
SOUND OK?
YES!!


PRICE TAG ON THE BOTTOM.
OH... MY.
YOU HAVE IT?
YES. MY HUSBAND DOES TAXREFUND "GIGGLE" YES
FINE THEN, LET'S GET STARTED MRS...?
GREENE.
GREENE
PUT THIS ON, I'LL GET EVERYTHING READY

FAMOUS LAST WORDS



"What scares me is what scares you.
We're all afraid of the same things.
That's why horror is such a powerful genre."

- John Carpenter

If you enjoyed reading this issue of *Famous Monsters* magazine, spread the word. Tell your friends to pick up a copy. Work the pop-culture conversation around you to include Sci-Fi, fantasy, and horror. Do it so we can cultivate, educate, and ensure generations of Monster Kids to come.

/fmofl @famousmonsters /fmof /fmofl

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